THE LIVES OF THE TWELVE

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams (ʿa)

Written By
Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī

▪PART TWO▪

A LOOK AT THE LIVES OF IMAM SAJJAD (ʿa), IMAM BAQIR (ʿa), AND IMAM SADIQ (ʿa)

Translated By
Sayyid Ali Musawi

The Lives of the Twelve is a pioneering work that details the lives of the Twelve Shia Imams. While most works on the Twelve Imams focuses on the basics of their lives, this text goes into the details of their social and political lives and how they affected change throughout their societies. Through extensive research, Shaykh Mahdi Pishvai has been able to craft together many details which were not widely known before. This is the first time a book of this caliber has been published in the English language. Today, we live in times where morality and a sense of right and wrong have all but disappeared. In light of this, we can turn to the teachings and wisdom of the Twelve in order to see how we can help bring back morality and that human sense of differentiating between right and wrong in our society. This work is composed of four distinct volumes, each of which goes into the lives of three of the Twelve Imams.

NOOR COLLECTIVE
PUBLICATIONS

The Lives of the Twelve

(Part Two)

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams

Written By: Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī

Translated By: Sayyid Ali Musawī

Copyright 2018 Sayyid Ali Musawi

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except ' reviewers, who may quote brief passages in a review.

ɔrary of Congress Control Number 143563

Printed and bound in the United States of America

First Printing December 2018

Published by Noor Collective Publications
PO Box 500862
San Diego, California, USA 92150

Visit www.NoorCollective.org

Preface and Acknowledgments

-By Sayyid Ali Musawi

In the name of God, the All-Beneficent, the Ever Merciful

Many times, the work on the lives of the Twelve Imams ('a) tend to be strictly biographical in nature and they do not deal with the social or political aspects of their lives. This book primarily summarizes the biographical aspects of their lives and it delves into the details of how they worked to spread the true teachings of the religion of Islam throughout their societies. Indeed, we are indebted to these Twelve Guides; without their teachings and their guidance, we would have been plunged into the depths of darkness.

Although this book began as a project many long years ago, this second part was finally completed in the middle of this cold (Southern California cold) winter in the month of December, 2018. We thank God for his blessings which weigh heavy on us and we ask that he guides us in his path and that

he allows us to be more perfect in serving him. Truly, nothing is possible except through God.

I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to my parents, who have been so integral all of these years in teaching and guiding me. I would also like to thank everyone who has been a part of this journey thus far, particularly my teachers in the religious seminary of Qum, Iran. My years there proved invaluable to who I am today and I would not trade them for anything in this world. I would also like to thank the members of the Noor Collective in San Diego, California for creating the platform which inspired this publication. Finally, I would like to thank Issa D. for his help in the final editing of this manuscript, as well as Haider al-Shaher for his work on the cover page. May we all be worthy one day to call ourselves the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa)...

Sayyid Ali Musawi

December 20, 2018

San Diego, California

Contents

The Lives of the Twelve ..... o

(Part Two) ..... o

A Look at the Social and Political Lives of the Twelve Infallible Imams .. o
Written By: Shaykh Mahdī Pīshvā'ī ..... o

Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn 10

A Brief Look into the Life of Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn 1
Caliphs Who Lived during the Time of the Fourth Imam 2
Divine Expediency - The Illness of the Imam 3
The Messenger of the Revolt of Karbalā 5
A Socially Stifled Era 5
The Evil Reign of 'Abd al-Malik 8
The Agents of Oppression 11
Ḥajjāj in Iraq 12
Waves of Killing and Fear 14
The Life of Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik 15
Walīd's Corruption 16
Oppressive Governors and Commanders 17
Why Didn't the Fourth Imam Revolt? 17
A Difficult Path 18
The Revolt of the People of Medina 19
The Role of Abdullah ibn Zubayr 21
Why Didn't the Fourth Imam Join the Rebels? 22
The Shelter for the Sanctuary Seekers 23
The Imam's Struggle against the Corruption of His Time 23
1- Keeping Alive the Remembrance of 'Āshūrā 24
2- Guiding and Advising the Nation 25
Building a Framework 27
The Deterioration of the Moral Condition of the Muslims 28
The Necessity of Spreading Pure Islamic Teachings 31
3- Teaching Spirituality through Supplications 32
The Collection of Sajjādīyah 33
The Political Aspects of Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah 36
4- The Struggle against Government Scholars 38
Who was Zuhrī? 39
Zuhrī as Imam Sajjād's Student 41
Zuhrī as a Functionary of the Umayyid Government 41
The Caliph's Need for Government Scholars 43
The Fabricated Traditions of Zuhrī 46

The Fourth Imam's Critical Letter to Zuhrī 50
A Study in Freedom 55
5- Spreading Religious Knowledge 57
6- Assisting the Needy 58
7- The Imam as the Centerpoint of Education 59

Imam Muḥammad Bāqir 63

A Brief Look into the Life of Imam Bāqir 64
Caliphs Contemporary to Imam Bāqir 64
The Founder of a Great Movement of Learning 65
Imam Bāqir according to the Scholars 66
The Students of Imam Bāqir's School 67
The Splitter of Knowledge and the Opener of the Doors of Learning 67
An Important Point 68
The Political and Social Conditions during the Life of the Imam 69
Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik 69
Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik 70
The Fire of Vengeance 70
Corruption in the Government 71
'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz 72
The Struggle against Corruption 72
The Prohibition of Cursing Imam 'Alī 74
The Effect of One Teacher 75
A Momentous Acknowledgement 76
The Return of Fadak to the Descendants of Fāṭimah 77
The Prohibition of Recording Traditions 78
An Irreparable Harm 81
Baseless Justifications 83
Political Motivations 85
Did the Prophet Prohibit the Compilation of Traditions? 85
The Shia: The First Compilers of Tradition 86
Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik 89
The False Testimony 89
Singing, Dancing, and Gambling 91
Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik 91
The Influence of Corrupt and Deviant Individuals 92
Imam Bāqir in Syria 93
A Shooting Competition 94
A Debate with the Archbishop of the Christians 96
An Unworthy Accusation 98
The Debates of Imam Bāqir 98

The Sixth Imam 101

Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq 101

A Brief Look at the Life of Imam Ṣādiq 102

Caliphs Who Lived during the Time of the Imam 102
The Vast Knowledge of Imam Ṣādiq 103
The Political and Social Conditions during the Time of Imam Ṣādiq ... 106
The Social Conditions of the Imam's Time 106
The Meeting of Various Religions and Sects 108
The Great Ja'farī University 108
Mufaḍḍal's Treatise on the Oneness of God 109
The Breadth of Imam Ṣādiq's University 111
The Debates of Imam Ṣādiq 114
Explaining Religious Precepts from the Shia Viewpoint 116
The Imam's Stance against Deviation 118
Examples of the Imam's Students 119
The Genius of Hishām ibn Ḥakam 119
In Pursuit of the Truth 120
A Time for the Meeting of Different Ideas 121
The First Meeting 122
The Compilations of Hishām 124
The Imam's Political Activities 126
The Dispatch of Representatives in the Propagation of the Concept of the Imamate 126
The Factors behind the Downfall of the Umayyids 127
Why Did Imam Ṣādiq Reject the 'Abbāsid Revolutionaries? 130
Letters from the Leaders of the Movement to Imam Ṣādiq 132
Ibrāhīm Imām's Horrifying Command to Abū Mūslim 135
The Crimes of Abū Mūslim 136
Selection and Planning 138
Imam Ṣādiq in Opposition to the 'Abbāsids 139
The Politics of Economic Hardship 140
A Wave of Blood 142
Medina under Economic Siege 143
Imam Ṣādiq and Manṣūr 144
The Creation of Religious Scholars 146
A Compulsory Compilation 147
The Revolt of Zayd ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn 148
The Summoning of Zayd to Damascus 148
A Compulsory Journey 149
In Kūfah 150
The Great Battle 151
The Martyrdom of Zayd 151
Did Imam Ṣādiq Agree with the Revolt of Zayd? 152

Part Two: A Look at the Lives of Imam Sajjād, Imam Bāqir, and Imam Ṣādiq

Noor Collective Publications

In Collaboration with '313 Productions'

The Fourth Imam

Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn

A Brief Look into the Life of Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn

Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) is the son of Imam Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿa) and Shahr Bānūwīyah.[1] He is most famously known by his titles of Zayn al-ʿAbidīn and Sajjād. Zayn al-ʿAbidīn means 'the adornment of the worshippers' and Sajjād refers to someone who spends a great deal of time in the state of prostration before God.

Imam Sajjād (ʿa) was born in the year 38 Hijrī[2] and he spent the period of his youth in the city of Medina. He was alive for two years during the rule of his grandfather, Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ʿa), and after that, he was present for ten years of the imamate of his uncle, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). During this time, Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) was the caliph of the Muslims for a period of six months. After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) in the year 50 Hijrī, Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) became the next imam and his period of imamate lasted around ten years before he was martyred at Karbala. The last years in the imamate of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) coincided with the peak of Mūʿāwīya's political power, and were filled with constant altercations; Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) was witness to all of these events.

In the month of Muḥarram, 61 Hijrī, Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) was present at the revolt of Karbalā and the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions. After the tragedy of

---

[1] Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb Kulaynī, Ūṣūl al-Kāfī, researched and edited by: ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, Tehran, Maktabah al-Ṣādiq, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 467.
- Shaykh Mufīd, Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 253.
- Faḍl ibn Ḥasan Ṭabarsī, 'I'lām al-Warā Bi'I'lām al-Hudā, Third Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, p. 256.
In the books of history, the name of the mother of the Fourth Imam (a) is one for which there are differences of opinion. In addition to Shahr Bānūwīyah, there are an additional 12 names, which she has been called by. Among these are: Shahi Zanān, Jahān Shah, Shahr Nāz, Jahān Bānūwīyah, Khawlah, and Salāfah. For more information, refer to: Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Jaʿfar, The Life of ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), First Print, Tehran, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1365 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 27-29.

[2] Shaykh Mufīd, Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 253.
- ʿAllāmah Ṭabarsī, Tāj al-Mawālīd (part of a collection called Majmūʿah Nafsīyah), Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 112.

Karbalā, the imamate was transferred to him; the Imam (ʿa) and the rest of the captives were then taken to Kūfah and later to Syria. During this journey, he was the guardian and support of the rest of the group during the hard times and difficulties which they encountered. During this journey, Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) disgraced the government of Yazīd through his fiery and emotion-evoking sermons. After leaving Syria, he took up Medina as his place of residence. This continued until he was martyred in the year 94 or 95 Hijrī. He is buried in the graveyard of Baqīʿ, next to the grave of his uncle Imam Ḥasan (ʿa).

Caliphs Who Lived during the Time of the Fourth Imam

Imam ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) lived during the times of the following caliphs:

1- Yazīd ibn Mūʿāwīya (61-64 Hijrī)[3]
2- ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr (61-73 Hijrī)[4]
3- Mūʿāwīya ibn Yazīd (several months in 64 Hijrī)
4- Marwān ibn Ḥakam (for nine months in 65 Hijrī)
5-ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (65-86 Hijrī)
6- Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (86-96 Hijrī)

---

[3] The time periods mentioned, signify the time that they ruled during the imamate of Imam Sajjād (a). They do not necessarily encompass their entire period of rule.

[4] ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr was among the small number of individuals who had not given the oath of allegiance to Yazīd. After the death of Mūʿāwīya, and a short time before the departure of Imam Ḥusayn (a) to Mecca, he entered the city and became engaged in political activities. After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (a), since he had no other rivals in the land of the Ḥijāz, he gathered some supporters and announced himself as the caliph. Yazīd, up to the very end of his life, was unable to defeat him, and he ruled in Mecca until 73 Hijrī. ʿAbdullah conquered the Ḥijāz, Iraq, Egypt, and part of the eastern Muslim lands, while Yazīd's successor was only able to rule Syria and some other limited areas. Therefore, from the year 61 until the year 73, the Muslim lands were governed by two separate rulers, who each had their own spheres of power. Later on, ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr was defeated and killed by the forces of ʿAbd al-Malik in the year 73 Hijrī. After this, all of the Muslim lands were ruled under the government of the Marwanids, and Syria was once again considered the center of rule.

Divine Expediency - The Illness of the Imam

Unfortunately, some people who are unaware of history, view the Fourth Imam ('a) as the perpetually "Sick Imam". They conjure up an image of him as being physically pale and sickly, in addition to him being forever depressed and gloomy. The reality is far from this, as the Imam ('a) was only ill for a short period of time during the tragedy of Karbalā. He recovered quickly after 'Āshūrā, and for a period of 35 years, just like the rest of the Imams ('a), enjoyed full physical health and wellbeing.

Without a doubt, the illness which the Imam ('a) experienced was a form of divine protection. Through it, he became exempt from the duty of fighting,[5] and was protected from a certain death; through this, the line of the Imams ('a) was allowed to continue. If the Imam ('a) had not been bedridden with sickness, it would have been possible for him to fight against Yazīd and his soldiers, and he would have surely been martyred alongside his father and his companions. If this had taken place, the light of guidance for the Muslim world would have been extinguished.

Sibṭ ibn Jawzī has written: "Since 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) was ill, he was not killed."[6] Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad has also written: "On that day ('Āshūrā), when 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) was with his father, he was either 23 or 24 years of age. Whoever says that he was a child during this time, has no basis for saying such a thing. He was actually ill on that day, and because of this, he did not participate in the battle."[7]

Ibn Sa'ad has also reported: "After the killing of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, Shimr approached 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, while he was ill and

---

[5] Mas'ūdī, Ithbāt al-Waṣīyah, Fourth Edition, Najaf, Al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 167.
Also refer to: Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 324.

[6] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 324.
Also refer to: Ibn al-I'mād al-Ḥanbalī, Shadarāt al-Dhahab Fī Akhbār Min Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, vol. 1, p. 105.

[7] Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 221.

bedridden. Shimr said: 'Kill him.' One of the companions of Shimr said: 'Glory be to God, shall we kill a young man who is both ill and has not participated in the battle?' At this time, 'Umar ibn Sa'ad arrived and said: 'Leave the women and this sick one alone.'"[8]

Shaykh Mufīd has narrated from Ḥamīd ibn Muslim, one of the soldiers of Yazīd, that: "On the day of 'Āshūrā, we arrived at the tent of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn; he was exceedingly ill and bedridden. Shimr came with a group that was unmounted, and said to me: 'Are you not going to kill this sick one?' I responded: 'Glory be to God, do you also kill children?[9] This is a child and he is ill; his illness is going to kill him...' I continued with a few similar words, until I changed his mind from killing him. At this time, 'Umar ibn Sa'ad came. The women shouted at him and they cried. He told his soldiers: 'None of you can enter the homes of these women and do not disturb this sick youth.'"[10]

The illness of the Fourth Imam ('a) was clearly due to divine expediency, and through it, his life was saved. The illness itself does not entail psychological or spiritual weakness. In clear contradiction to this idea, during the time of the captivity of the survivors, the Imam ('a) was a beacon of hope and a source of strength for them. He also faced the enemy with bravery and courage, and his sermons in both Kūfah and Syria are clear evidence of this.

After the captives were sent to Kūfah, Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn ('a) exchanged some harsh words with 'Ubaydullah ibn Zīyād in his court. 'Ubaydullah became enraged and ordered that the Imam ('a) be executed. The Imam ('a) replied to this by saying:

---

[8] Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, p. 212 and also refer to: Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 104.

[9] It is possible that Ḥamīd ibn Muslim called the Imam (a) a child in order to bring about feelings of mercy in the soldiers. It is also possible that he attributed such words to himself in front of the Shias, in order to lessen his share in the sin of what had taken place.

[10] Shaykh Mufīd, Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 242. Also refer to: Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, Beirut, Dār al-Qāmūs al-Ḥadīth, vol. 6, p. 260; Akhtab Khawārizmī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, researched and edited by: Shaykh Muḥammad Samāwī, Qum, Maktabah Mufīd, vol. 2, p. 38.

"Do you threaten me with death? Do you not know that being killed is an ordinary affair for us, and martyrdom is an honor and distinction for us?"[11]

The Messenger of the Revolt of Karbalā

After the martyrdom of his father at Karbalā, Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa) was left as the head of the survivors. In this role, he took on the responsibility of propagating the message of the revolution and the martyrdom of his father. During the time of his captivity, he used the power of his sermons to disgrace and destabilize the corrupt government of the Umayyids, and to awaken the masses to the reality of their government.

Due to the widespread and extensive propaganda which the Umayyid government had spread about the family of the Prophet, it is clear that if the family had not engaged in awakening the people and revealing the true nature of the Umayyids, the agents of the Umayyid government would have distorted the image of Imam Ḥusayn's revolution. With the passage of time, they would have shown it in a corrupt and twisted light. The the efforts of Imam Sajjād (ʿa) and the rest of the survivors were effective in showing the true nature of the revolt, and in not allowing the Umayyids to put their own spin on what had taken place. Through their actions, they showed the evil reality of the Umayyid government and this knowledge became a blow which the government found itself unable to withstand.

A Socially Stifled Era

When we look at the lives of the Twelve Imams (ʿa), we find that the era of the Imams (ʿa) can be divided into four general periods. The life of Imam Sajjād (ʿa) can be counted as part of the fourth era. These four eras are as follows:

- The era of a sense of hopelessness in gaining victory

[11] Akhtab Khawārizmī, Maqtal al-Ḥusayn, researched and edited by: Shaykh Muḥammad Samāwī, Qum, Maktabah Mufīd, vol. 2, p. 43.

through armed struggle

- A developmental struggle with the hope of bringing about an Islamic government through the family of the Prophet. (This was considered a long term struggle)
- Building the foundations for this movement through the educational and moral training of the people
- Spreading true Islamic teachings and thought, and exposing religious deviations and distortions

It is interesting to note that by itself, the tragedy of Karbalā was disastrous to the Shia movement in the short term. As news of what had taken place spread throughout the country (particularly in the lands of Iraq and the Ḥijāz), a great fear spread within the various Shia communities. It became clear that Yazīd was willing to go as far as killing the grandson of the Prophet and taking his whole family captive, in order to strengthen and solidify his rule. This meant that he was not averse to using any means (even the most horrific and evil) in reaching his goals.[12]

This fear, which had spread through the Shia community, and which was particularly evident in the cities of Medina and Kūfah, was made worse by the tragedy of Ḥurrah, which took place in the year 63 Hijrī. In this siege and subsequent massacre, the mercilessness of Yazīd's army was made even clearer for all to see. In the cities where the descendants of the Prophet lived, such as Kūfah and Medina, fear became the prevailing emotion. The Shias and the followers of the Imams (ʿa), who were counted as among the enemies of the Umayyids, were greatly weakened and their organization and order was disrupted. Imam Sajjād (ʿa) pointed out this sad state of affairs when he said: "In all of Mecca and Medina, there are not twenty

[12] The taking prisoners of the women and children, and the exhibition of the cut off heads of the martyrs was designed to instill fear and terror in the opponents of the Umayyid government.

individuals who love us."[13]

Mas'ūdī, the famous historian, has explained: "'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) took on the imamate in a hidden way, with severe dissimulation, and during a very difficult time.'[14] Imam Ṣādiq ('a), in describing this bitter and sorrowful state of affairs said: "After the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ('a), they all turned back (from the family of the Prophet) except three individuals: Abū Khālid Kābulī, Yaḥyā ibn Umm al-Ṭawīl, and Jubayr ibn Maṭ'am."[15] Afterwards, people joined them and their numbers increased. Yaḥyā ibn Umm al-Ṭawīl would go to the mosque of the Prophet (ṣ) and speak to the people, saying: "We are opposed to you (your way and ideology). Between us and you, there is enmity and anger that is manifest and everlasting..."[16]

It is evident that these kinds of open words and actions, in a very constrained social and political atmosphere, could only be attributed to a select few individuals such as Yaḥyā ibn Umm al-Ṭawīl. These types of men had prepared themselves and they were ready to face the potential consequences of their stance. In essence, they were ready to give everything for what they believed in. Yaḥyā ibn Umm al-Ṭawīl later had his hands and feet cut off, and he was martyred for his support of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) by the governor Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf.[17]

Faḍl ibn Shādhān was one of the most prominent scholars and researchers of the Shias during the middle of the third century Hijrī; he was one of the students of Imam Jawād ('a) and Imam 'Askarī ('a). He is quoted as having said: "During the beginning of the imamate of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a), there

---

[13] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Second Edition, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1394 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 36, p. 143; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, First Edition, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1378 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 104.

[14] Mas'ūdī, Ithbāt al-Waṣīyah, Fourth Edition, Najaf, al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 167.

[15] According to the famous researcher, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Shūshtarī, in place of Jubayr ibn Maṭ'am, the name Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr ibn Maṭ'am is correct. (Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Tehran, The Center for Book Publications, 1388 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 9, p. 399).

[16] Shaykh Mufīd, Al-Ikhtiṣāṣ, researched and compiled by: 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, Qum, Manshūrāt Jamā'at al-Mudarisīn Fī Ḥawzat al-'Ilmiyah Biqum al-Muqadasah, p. 64.

[17] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl, 1348 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 133.

were only five people who were his followers. These were: Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Sa'īd ibn Mussayyib, Muḥammad ibn Maṭ'am, Yaḥyā ibn Umm al-Ṭawīl, and Abū Khālid Kābulī."[18]

The Evil Reign of 'Abd al-Malik

The imamate of Imam Sajjād ('a) was concurrent with one of the darkest periods of rule in the history of Islam. As much as the previous governments had turned dictatorial and selfish in nature, the rulers during the time of the Fourth Imam ('a) were much worse; they would openly scorn the most holy of concepts in Islam, and they would publicly step on the most fundamental principles of the religion. In the face of all this, criticism was met with unbelievably harsh punishments from the Ummayids.

The greater part of the imamate of Imam Sajjād ('a) was during the rule of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān; this was a period that was 21 years in duration. Historians have described 'Abd al-Malik as an individual who was clever, cautious, farsighted, educated, intelligent, and scholarly.[19] The writer Al-Fakhrī says: "'Abd al-Malik was an individual who was wise, intelligent, scholarly, learned, clever, tyrannical, awe inspiring, extremely diplomatic, a good manager, and prudent."[20]

Hindushāh has written: "He was intelligent, erudite, eloquent, a jurisprudent, learned in matters of traditions and poetry..." [21] Before he reached power, he was counted as one of the jurisprudents of the city of Medina.[22] He was famous for his ascetism, worship, and religiousness. He would spend his time at the mosque in worship in such a way that he was known

---

[18] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl, 1348 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 115.

[19] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 520.

[20] Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 122 and 124.

[21] Tajārub al-Salaf, edited by: 'Abbās Iqbāl, Third Print, Tehran, Ṭahūrī Bookstore, 1357 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 75.

[22] Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 122.
- Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muhī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 216.

as the "The Dove[23] of the Mosque".[24]

It is said that when his father Marwān passed away, and the caliphate was passed on to him, the news reached him while he was busy reading the Holy Quran. When he heard this news, he closed the Quran and said: "Now a separation has occurred between me and you, and I have nothing more to do with you!"[25]

His words were in earnest and he ended up separating completely from the Quran. He committed such evil actions that historians have mentioned him with bitterness. Suyūṭī and Ibn Athīr have written: "During the course of Islamic history, ʿAbd al-Malik was the first individual to practice treachery and treason (ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿAās was killed after being guaranteed protection and security). He was also the first person to prohibit people from speaking in front of the caliph, as well as being the first person to prevent anyone from enjoining the good (which was one of the most basic Islamic precepts)."[26]

Two years after the defeat of ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr in Mecca (in the year 75 Hijrī), he entered the city of Medina during the course of a Ḥajj pilgrimage. During his speech to the people, he said: "I am neither like the wretched caliph (ʿUthmān), nor like the lenient caliph (Mūʿāwīya), nor like the weak-willed caliph (Yazīd). I will cure the people through the exclusive use of my sword! You want us to act like the 'Muhājirs', yet you do not act like them yourselves (you tell us to act piously, but you do not act so yourselves). I swear by God that if any one after this, tries to guide me towards piety, I will cut off his head!"[27]

---

[23] This is a term which indicates attachment and closeness to the Mosque.

[24] HindūShāh, Ibid, p. 76.

[25] Suyūṭī, Ibid, p. 217.
- Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 122.
- Georgie Zaydān, The History of the Islamic Civilization, translation by ʿAlī Jawhar Kalām, Tehran, Amīr Kabīr, 1336 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 100.

[26] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 218.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 522. It must be noted that Mūʿāwīya had done some of these actions before.

[27] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd,

This last line was said for the benefit of the lecturers and Friday prayer leaders, for they would customarily begin their sermons with the words 'Fear Allah'.[28] It is evident that when a caliph says such words in the city of the Prophet (ṣ), right next to his place of burial, and then goes on to attack the very way of life which he has established, then it is clear how his governors will rule in the far flung provinces of the Muslim world.

During the long course of his rule, 'Abd al-Malik became so accustomed and inclined towards oppression, corruption, and injustice, that the light of faith was completely extinguished from his heart. One day he confessed this reality when he told Sa'īd ibn Mussayyib: "I have changed to the point that if I do good actions, I do not become happy, and if I commit evil actions I do not become upset." Sa'īd ibn Mussayyib replied: "The death of your heart has become complete!"[29]

'Abd al-Malik would frequently converse with a woman by the name of Umm al-Dardā'. One day Umm al-Dardā' said to him: "Oh Commander of the Faithful, I have heard that after worshipping and performing the night prayers, you have then gone on to drink wine?" 'Abd al-Malik replied by saying: "Not only did I drink wine, but I have also drunk people's blood!"[30]

This was the same man, who during one period of his life, would ask God to protect him from Yazīd's military campaign against 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr in Mecca, and he would show hatred towards Yazīd. Yet, when he himself reached power, he continued the same policies as his predecessor. Moreover, he appointed a cruel individual such as Ḥajjāj to implement them in the society. This individual went on to use stone laden

---

Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 218.

- Georgie Zaydān, The History of the Islamic Civilization, Translation by 'Alī Jawhar Kalām, Tehran, Amīr Kabīr, 1336 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 99.

[28] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Life of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), First Print, Tehran, The Office for the Propagation of Islamic Culture, 1365 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 98.

[29] Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 122.

- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 521.

- HindūShāh, Ibid, p. 76.

[30] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 216.

catapults against the Holy Sanctuary and the Kaaba, simply because Ibn Zubayr had taken refuge there.[31]

The Agents of Oppression

The governors and officials of ʿAbd al-Malik followed his lead and unleashed a terror inducing style of rule in their respective areas. They used brutality, bullying, and brute force against their subjects. Masʿūdī has written: "ʿAbd al-Malik was a murderous individual. His officials, such as Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq, Mahlab, the governor of Khurāsān, and Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl, the governor of Medina, were also like ʿAbd al-Malik in their merciless and cruel methods of rule."[32]

Hishām ibn Ismāʿīl, who was the ruler of Medina, was so harsh and severe against his subjects, and so merciless in harassing the descendants of the Prophet (ṣ), that when Walīd inherited the caliphate after the death of his father, he had no choice but to remove him from his post.[33] The worst among all of these was Ḥajjāj, whose savage crimes are well-documented in the books of history. After Ḥajjāj defeated ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr, ʿAbd al-Malik chose him as the governor of the Ḥijāz which included the cities of Mecca, Medina, and Ṭāif and he remained in that post for a period of two years.[34]

In the city of Medina, Ḥajjāj had a group of the companions branded on the neck with hot irons. These companions included famous figures such as Jābir ibn ʿAbdullah Anṣārī, Anas ibn Mālik, Sahl ibn Saʿadī, among others. His intentions were to lower and degrade their position, under the pretext that they were the killers of ʿUthmān.[35]

---

[31] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 217.
- Hindūshāh, Ibid, p. 76.

[32] Marwaj al-Dhahab wa Maʿādin al-Jawhar, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 91.

[33] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 27 and 29.
- Muḥammad ibn Saʿad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 220.

[34] Ibn Qutaybah Daynāwarī, al-Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah, Third Edition, Cairo, Maktabah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 31.

[35] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 18.

When Ḥajjāj was about to leave Medina, he said the following: "I thank God that he is removing me from this rotten city. This city is the filthiest of all cities, and its people, in relation to the Commander of the Faithful, are the most deceitful and brazen. If it was not for the command of the Commander of the Faithful, I would have made this city one with the earth. This city is nothing but a few pieces of wood that they consider the pulpit of the Prophet and a few decayed bones that they consider as the grave of the Prophet."[36]

Ḥajjāj in Iraq

After Ḥajjāj subdued the cities of Mecca and Medina, ʿAbd al-Malik realized that if anyone was going to make the Iraqis compliant to his orders, it would be Ḥajjāj. Therefore, in the year 75 Hijrī, ʿAbd al-Malik handed the rule of Iraq (Baṣrah and Kūfah) over to him. When Ḥajjāj arrived in Kūfah, he did not act in the ordinary manner of a governor sent there by the caliph. Normally a governor would enter the city with pomp, accompanied by a large entourage. In this case, he covered his face and entered the city mosque quietly, without being recognized. After entering, he broke through the ranks of the people, and went and sat on top of the pulpit. For a long period of time, he sat there in complete silence. A clamor began to rise from the people asking who this person was. One person said: "Let us stone him." Others in the gathering replied: "No, be patient until we can see who it is."

As soon as silence overtook the gathering, Ḥajjāj removed his face cover and began to speak. He said: "Oh people of Kūfah, I see heads, which are like fruits that have ripened and are ready to be plucked from their bodies. This is an action which will be performed by me. I also see blood which will run all over the turbans and the beards..." He then continued with his threatening words and frightened the people so much that

---

[36] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 359.
- Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Jaʿfar, The Analytical History of Islam Upto The Downfall of the Umayyid Government, Sixth Edition, Tehran, The Center For University Publications, 1365 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 182.

the small stones fell out of the hands of the man who had wanted to stone him.[37]

Ḥajjāj's entrance to Baṣrah was similar to his entrance into Kūfah. Ibn Qutaybah Daynāwarī described his entrance into Baṣrah in the following way: "Ḥajjāj, along with 2,000 Syrian soldiers and their supporters, as well as 4,000 additional soldiers, departed towards Baṣrah. When he was near the city, he decided to enter on Friday, during the time of the weekly congregational prayers. He took 2,000 of the soldiers with him and he ordered his soldiers to surround the mosque and stand guard at each of the mosque's seventeen doorways. One hundred soldiers were posted at each of these entrances and they were ordered to conceal their swords underneath their clothing.

Then he ordered his soldiers: "When you hear a commotion in the mosque, if anyone attempts to leave the building, make their head leave the mosque sooner than their body!" His soldiers positioned themselves next to the doors and laid in wait. Ḥajjāj entered the mosque, escorted by 200 of his soldiers. These soldiers were all armed with swords hidden underneath their clothing. One hundred of these men were in front of him, while the other one hundred were behind him. Ḥajjāj was armed and had a sword concealed underneath his own clothing as well.

Ḥajjāj then instructed his soldiers: "When we enter the mosque, I will speak to the people and they will throw stones at me. When you see me remove the turban from my head and put it upon my knee, pull your swords out of their sheaths and begin to kill." With this plan, when the time for prayer arrived, he ascended to the top of the pulpit and began to speak: "The Commander of the Faithful (ʿAbd al-Malik) has selected me to

---

[37] Mabrad, Al-Kāmil Fī Luqah wa al-Adab, First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 311.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 375.
- Masʿūdī, Ithbāt al-Waṣīyah, Fourth Edition, Najaf, al-Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥaydarīa, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 127. Refer to: Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 19.

rule over this city and to divide the public treasury amongst you. He has ordered me to help the oppressed and to punish the oppressors; to commend the ones who do good, and to punish the ones who do evil... When the caliph selected me for this job, he gave me two swords: one is the sword of mercy, and the other is the sword of torment and punishment. Along the way, I lost the sword of mercy, but I still have here with me the sword of torment and punishment..."

When the people heard this, they began to throw stones at Ḥajjāj while he was on the pulpit. Suddenly Ḥajjaj removed his turban from his head and placed it upon his knee. Without delay, his soldiers began to attack and kill the people. When the people saw the situation, they tried to escape the slaughter in the mosque, but whoever tried to leave had his head cut off at the exit. Using this tactic, the people were forced to remain in the mosque, where they were all killed. There was so much killing that pools of blood flowed to the door of the mosque and through the bazaar.[38]

Using methods such as these, Ḥajjāj established a rule based on fear and terror in Iraq; many pious and innocent people were killed during the time of his reign. He spread such fear in the hearts of the people that this fear spread past the borders of Iraq, reaching far into Khūzistān and the eastern limits of the Muslim nation.

Waves of Killing and Fear

Masʿūdī, the famous historian, has written that: "Ḥajjāj ruled for 20 years. During this time, the number of people that were put to death by his executioners or who died under torture reached 120,000 in number! Moreover, this number does not account for the people who fought against Ḥajjāj and were killed by his forces.

When Ḥajjāj died, his infamous prison was found to contain 50,000 men and 30,000 women, of whom 16,000 were

[38] Ibn Qutayba Daynāwarī, al-Imāmah wa al-Sīyāsah, Third Edition, Cairo, Maktabah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 32.

completely naked and had no clothes. Ḥajjāj would imprison the men and the women in one place, and his prisons contained no roofs. As a result, the prisoners would suffer from the hot sun of the summers and the bitter cold and rain of the winters."[39]

The Life of Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik

After the death of ʿAbd al-Malik, his son Walīd succeeded the caliphate. Some historians praise Walīd and consider him superior to his father ʿAbd al-Malik, his grandfather Marwān, as well as many other Umayyid Caliphs. This is because, with the exception of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, no other Umayyid caliph engaged in so many works of public benefit and development. During the course of his caliphate, Walīd exerted efforts in developing, expanding, and renovating mosques and other holy sites; his governors and commanders were also independently encouraged in these endeavors.

The historians have written: "Walīd commissioned the construction of the main mosque of Damascus and he also expanded the Prophet's mosque in Medina and the Aqṣā mosque. He ordered that a mosque be built in each city that did not contain a place for prayers. In order to protect the Islamic borders, he had various fortresses and garrisons built. In addition, roads were built connecting different parts of the nation, wells were excavated, and schools and hospitals were erected. A portion of the public treasury was permanently set aside for the paralyzed, bedridden, sick, and needy.

Walīd also built sanatoriums for taking care of the blind, the lepers, and the disabled; doctors and nurses were selected to take care of these individuals, and it was ordered that they be given the necessary nutrition and rest. Orphanages were established to take care of the orphans and to see to their education and upbringing. He would also personally visit the city and the bazaars quite often and he would enact price

[39] Marwaj al-Dhahab wa Maʿādin al-Jawhar, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 166 and 167.

controls to keep prices affordable for the people."[40]

Walīd's Corruption

In spite of these positive characteristics, Walīd also possessed certain negative characteristics as well— he was subject to many clear deviations that should not be left unsaid. According to historians, Walīd was an oppressive and tyrannical individual. His mother and father raised him from an early age to be capricious and unrestrained, and he was lacking in manners.[41] Walīd was also unlearned in matters of Arabic grammar and syntax, and until the very end of his life, he was not able to speak the Arabic language properly. In the course of speaking, he would make many obvious (and embarrassing) errors.

One day, in a gathering with his father and other individuals, he began to speak with an Arab man, and he uttered a very simple sentence incorrectly. His father rebuked him and said: "Whoever does not know the Arabic language properly, cannot rule over the Arabs." After this situation, Walīd took some teachers and retreated into a room in order to learn Arabic grammar; he dedicated himself to this task for a period of six months. Yet when he was finished, he came out even more ignorant and confused about the rules of grammar than when he had first entered![42] It is possible that one of the reasons why Walīd was so persistent in expanding the arts and sciences was that he himself felt lacking in them, and so he wished to make up and cover his lack of knowledge through these endeavors.

---

[40] Sayyid Amīr 'Alī, A Short History of the Arabs, Translated by: 'Afīf al-Ba'albakī, Second Edition, Dār al-'Ilm Lil Malāyīn, 1967 A.D., p. 133; Also refer to: Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 36.

- Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 127.

[41] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 223.

[42] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 5, p. 11.

- Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 127.

Oppressive Governors and Commanders

Walīd would appoint corrupt governors, commanders, and Emirs to rule on his behalf in various provinces of the Muslim world. Naturally, these corrupt leaders made life very difficult for their subjects. One of these governors was Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf; after the death of ʿAbd al-Malik, Walīd kept him in his position in spite of all the crimes that he had committed and the people he had killed.

During this period of time, the area of Syria was under the direct control of Walīd. In Iraq, Ḥajjāj ruled as a governor, while in the Ḥijāz, ʿUthmān ibn Ḥabārah ruled, and in Egypt, Qūrah ibn Sharīk. Each of these individuals was famous for their injustice and tyranny. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who was Walīd's nephew, spoke about the rule of these men and said: "The earth has been filled with oppression and injustice! Oh God, deliver the people from these difficulties."[43]

Why Didn't the Fourth Imam Revolt?

In the previous pages, we shed some light on the political ituation during the time of the Imam (ʿa), and in doing so, it became clear for us why he did not revolt. The political and social atmosphere was one in which the Umayyid government had complete control over the people. The smallest hint of a social movement or armed struggle was doomed to be swiftly crushed. The government had a network of spies who would report on any and all potential dangers, and nothing would remain hidden from their ears. For example, one day ʿAbd al-Malik's spies reported to him that: "'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) has a servant whom he has freed and then married." ʿAbd al-Malik wrote a letter to the Imam (ʿa) where he criticized him and protested as to why he hadn't married someone who was within his own social class.

The Imam (ʿa) replied to him: "There is no one greater or higher than the Prophet (ṣ), and he took servants and slaves as

[43] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 5, p. 11.

his wives. God raised the things which were considered as lowly through Islam and he made everything which was incomplete, complete through it; (indeed) every abject individual was granted dignity under its auspices. Therefore, no Muslim can be considered as lowly and no lowliness remains but the lowliness of ignorance."[44]

Obviously, the caliph did not really care about the Imam's ('a) personal life. Through these tactics, 'Abd al-Malik wished to let the Imam ('a) know that all of his actions were under close watch. This even included actions which were in the realm of his private life. In conditions such as these, a revolutionary movement was not possible.

A Difficult Path

After the tragedy of 'Āshūrā, the Fourth Imam ('a) was placed in a very difficult position. On the one hand, he could quickly create a mass of emotion and galvanize the population, raising a resistance movement and initiating the fight against the powers of the time; this would only work if all of the necessary conditions existed in sufficient number and quality.

His second option was that he could use a long term, well measured, and deliberate strategy in order to harness the power of the people. The first part of this strategy involved reviving the basic precepts of the Islamic society and its social order. For the time being, he had to preserve his own life as well as the lives of his small group of companions so that this plan could be implemented.

In reality, this was a strategy which would build up the society and prepare worthy individuals through education and training. In turn, these people would then be unleashed upon the system to fight against it in a hidden but systematic manner. This struggle would continue until the necessary conditions were met for an outright overthrow of the

---

[44] Kulaynī, Furū Kāfī, Second Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1362 Hijrī Shamsi, vol. 5, p. 344 (The Book of Nikāḥ, Section on the Mu'mīn Kufūw al-Mu'mīn); Also refer to: Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 5, p. 214.
- Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, vol. 46, p. 105.

Ummayid government. It is without doubt that the first path was a path of sacrifice, but it isn't sufficient that one simply sacrifices towards something if it doesn't achieve the necessary results. These were factors which caused the Fourth Imam ('a) to take the second path, rather than the first.[45]

The Revolt of the People of Medina

The Revolt of Medina took place in the year 63 (or possibly 62) Hijrī, and became known as: "The Tragedy of Ḥurrah."[46] After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn ('a), a wave of hatred and anger swept through the Muslim nation. The Muslim community held the Ummayid government responsible for the massacre at Karbalā. In the city of Medina, which was a centerpoint of the family of the Prophet, his companions, and the Tābi'īn,[47] the people were disturbed and angered at what had taken place. The governor of Medina, 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Sufyān, who was similar to Yazīd in his inexperience, immaturity, and arrogance, organized a group of the city notables based on Yazīd's orders[48] and sent them to Damascus as representatives of the city. The goal was to allow them to see the caliph from up close and then return back to their city, encouraging the people of Medina to obedience towards him.

The governor of Medina ended up sending Mundhar ibn Zubayr ibn Awwām, 'Ubaydullah ibn Abī 'Amr Makhzūmī, 'Abdullah ibn Ḥanẓalah' Ghasīl al-Malā'ikah, as well as several other important personalities from the city to see Yazīd in Damascus. Yazīd, on the other hand, completely lacked any sense of Islamic manners and education. He had not chosen any advisors to guide him in such matters and tell him to at

---

[45] Ayatollah Khāminiī, Sayyid 'Alī, Pīshvā'ī Ṣādiq, Tehran, Sayyid Jamāl Publications, p. 24.

[46] The word Ḥurrah is used for a stony area which is covered with volcanic stones. The area around Medina is known for possessing such characteristics.

[47] The companions of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ).

[48] Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhūrī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Baghdad, Maktabah al-Muthannā, vol. 4, p. 31.

least act properly in front of these important men. Yazīd didn't have his father's prudence, and so he did not understand that since he was ruling as Islam's representative over the Muslims and his power was derived from his Islamic identity, he should at least put up a religious appearance for the benefit of the public, much like his father had done during his own rule.

When the guests from Medina arrived, Yazīd didn't restrain himself from drinking wine in front of them. He played with his dogs, had parties complete with singing and music, and exhibited his palace's general atmosphere of debauchery and libertinism. He also hosted them with great pomp and grandeur in his "Green Palace" and gave them extravagant gifts and expensive robes of honor. He assumed that by treating them in an intimate manner and by giving them expensive gifts, they would return to Medina and praise and commend him in front of the people. Yazīd had been corrupt for such a long period of time that he assumed that everyone else was just like him. His expectations naturally fell short, and instead of becoming pleased, the guests became enraged at what they were seeing.

All the representatives, with the exception of Mundhar ibn Zubayr ibn Awwām, who ended up going to Baṣrah, returned to Medina. There, they announced in front of the people: "We have returned from the presence of an individual who has no religion, who drinks wine, plays music, plays with dogs, and has gatherings with singers and coquettish women; he stays awake at night with a gathering of thieves and corrupt individuals. We hold you all as witnesses that we have deposed him from his position of caliph."

The son of Ḥanẓalah said: "I have returned from the presence of an individual, that even if no one helps me, I will still go to war against him with these few sons of mine. He granted me presents and treated me with respect, but I did not accept his gifts except on the condition that I use them against him in war." After this situation, the people of Medina gave their oath of allegiance to ʿAbdullah, the son of Ḥanẓalah. They marched towards the palace and threw out the governor

of the city, as well as all of the Umayyids who lived there.

When news of this reached Yazīd, he selected Muslim ibn ʿUqbah, a loyal and devoted follower of his, to lead a large army against them. He told him: "Give them three days reprieve. If they do not surrender by then, fight against them. When you become victorious, plunder everything that they possess, such as their wealth, animals, weapons, and food. Put all of these at your soldier's disposal..."

The Syrian army attacked Medina and a bloody battle ensued between the two sides. In the end, the rebels were defeated and their leaders were all killed. Muslim ordered his soldiers that for three days there was to be a mass killing spree, and a wholesale plundering of the city. The soldiers of Syria committed such crimes during this period that it is heartbreaking to describe them. After this event, Muslim was called Musrif by the people because of the severity and excess of his crimes. After the killing and plundering had stopped, Muslim took an oath of allegiance from the people, with the condition that they take the oath as slaves and not as free men.[49] In essence, they were made as de facto slaves of Yazīd.

The Role of Abdullah ibn Zubayr

ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr was a power-hungry individual by nature. Shortly before Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) entered Mecca in the year 60 Hijrī, he had entered the city and took up residence there. During the time that Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) lived there, the people did not pay him much attention due to the Imam's (ʿa) presence. After the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa), the path was opened for him and he announced his opposition to Yazīd and declared himself as the rightful caliph.

It must be noted that ʿAbdullah did not have any connection to the children of Amīr al-Mu'minīn. In addition,

---

[49] Refer to: Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhūrī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Baghdad, Maktabah Al Muthannā, vol. 4, p. 30-36.
- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dāru Ṣādir, 1399 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 102-103, and 111-121.
- Masʿūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 68-71.

he played an important role in the infamous "Battle of the Camel." During his time in Mecca, he ended up removing the praise of the Prophet (ṣ), which was a long established religious tradition, from the beginning of his sermons. He was asked about this and he replied: "The Prophet has bad descendants who stick out their necks in arrogance upon hearing his praise."[50] It was in light of these past actions that Imam Sajjād ('a) would express his worry about the revolt.[51]

According to some historians, 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr played a role in the rebellion of the people of Medina. Due to political considerations, after Imam Ḥusayn ('a) had been martyred, he censured the people of Iraq for having invited the Imam ('a), and then not helping him when he had come. He would also speak against Yazīd, calling him a wine drinker, a person who would play with dogs, and a debaucher; he would invite the people towards dethroning Yazīd.[52] He also played a role in having the governor of Medina and the Umayyids thrown out of the city.[53]

Why Didn't the Fourth Imam Join the Rebels?

The reasons behind the actions of the Fourth Imam's ('a) are as follows:

1- Through gauging the situation and seeing the severe restrictions which had been placed on the society after the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn ('a), the Imam ('a) predicted the defeat of the rebellion. He saw that if he personally participated, he would not be successful. In addition, he and his companions would also be killed. The results would have been the destruction of the Shia forces, without any tangible results or benefits.

---

[50] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 8.

[51] 'Alī ibn 'Īsā 'Irbilī, Kashf al-Ghammah Fī Marifat al-'A'immah, Tabriz, Maktabah Banī Hāshimī, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 299.

[52] Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhūrī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Baghdad, Maktabah al-Muthannā, vol. 4, p. 30.

[53] Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 69.

2- In regards to the past of 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr, and his influence over the rebels, the rebellion could not be considered as a purely Shia one. The Imam ('a) did not want the likes of Ibn Zubayr, who was a power-hungry man, to use him as a means for achieving his goals.
3- What ended up taking place was that the rebels nominated 'Abdullah ibn Ḥanẓalah as their leader and they never sought the opinion of Imam Sajjād ('a). Although the leaders of the rebellion were pious and pure men, and their criticisms and protests against the government of Yazīd were completely valid and justified, it was apparent that the movement was not a purely Shia inspired one; in the event of a victory, it was not clear if it would be to the benefit of the Shias or not.

It seems that due to these factors, the Imam ('a) chose not to participate in the rebellion of Medina. Yazīd also knew of this situation, and he was simultaneously aware of the public sentiments about the tragedy of Karbalā. Therefore, he ordered Muslim ibn 'Uqbah not to interfere or harass Imam Sajjād ('a) when the rebellion was quelled.

The Shelter for the Sanctuary Seekers

When the Umayyids were thrown out of Medina, Marwān appealed to the Imam ('a) to allow his wife and family to remain behind with him. The Imam ('a) graciously accepted because the women and the children were not guilty of any crimes. During the three days that Medina was awash in murder and plunder, the house of the Imam ('a) became a sanctuary for people seeking protection. Over four hundred women, along with their respective families, took refuge at Imam Sajjād's ('a) home, and he took care of them until the end of the ordeal.

The Imam's Struggle against the Corruption of His Time

After selecting the aforementioned second path, the Imam ('a) began a program of indirect education and training. He initiated these programs without raising the suspicions of the government. The most important of these activities are as

follows:

1- Keeping Alive the Remembrance of ʿĀshūrā

During the tragedy of ʿĀshūrā, the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions ended up costing the Umayyid government dearly in relation to their legitimacy. It affected how the masses viewed their government, as well as their support for their rulers. In order for this tragedy not to be forgotten as a result of government propaganda and the passage of time, the Imam (ʿa) used the weapon of mourning in order to keep the memory of the martyrs alive. The struggle was pushed forward indirectly using this innovative new medium of popular remembrance and mourning.

While this mourning was based on the emotions of what had taken place, it also possessed potent political dimensions as well. The repeated remembrance of the tragedy of Karbalā would not allow the oppression and crimes of the Umayyid government to be forgotten. Whenever the Imam (ʿa) wished to drink water, as soon as he would see the cup of water, his eyes would fill with tears. Whenever they asked him for the reason behind this, he would say: "How can I not cry when the followers of Yazīd allowed wild animals and beasts of prey to drink water freely, but they blocked my father from it (and they killed him while he was thirsty)." The Imam (ʿa) would also say: "Whenever I remember the killing of the children of Fāṭimah, I am choked with tears."

One day the servant of the Imam (ʿa) said to him: "Does your sadness and grief have no end?" Imam Sajjād (ʿa) replied to him, saying: 'Woe upon you, Yaʿqūb the prophet (ʿa) lost one of his twelve sons, and he cried so much that he lost sight in his eyes and from the severity of his grief, his back became bent. This was while his son was still alive (and he had not become hopeless of finding him). Yet I saw my father, brother, uncle, and 17 members of my family all killed and their bodies made one with the earth around me. After this, how is it possible that

my grief and sorrow will have an end?"[54]

Sahl ibn Shū'ayb, one of the notables of Egypt, has said: "One day I went to 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) and asked him how he was doing? He replied: 'I did not think that an important personality from Egypt such as yourself would not know our state. If you do not know our condition, let me describe it for you: Our condition amongst our people is similar to that of the Tribe of Israel, when they were amongst the people of Pharoah, who would kill their sons and leave their daughters alive. Today, our situation is so difficult and strained that the people say evil about our nobles and leaders on top of the pulpits, in order to gain nearness to our enemies.'"[55]

2- Guiding and Advising the Nation

Since the Imam ('a) lived in a time when the government had maximum control and influence over the lives of its citizens, he could not explicitly give sermons about the matters that he wished. Instead, he would use a unique style of preaching to introduce and acquaint people with the correct ideas of Islamic thought and ideology. This method of teaching the people had also been forgotten by the society; therefore, it was a potent method of acquainting the masses with the realities of Islam.

Through researching these sermons, it is clear that the Imam ('a) would use a very intelligent manner of speaking to the people. While advising the people, the Imam ('a) would suggest certain ideas and concepts to them, and these would take form in their minds over time. This was the most effective way of teaching the people the realities of Islam in the prevailing

---

[54] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Second Edition, Tehran, Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1394 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 46, p. 108.
- Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 107.
- Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ḥilyat al-'Awlīya wa al-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfīyā', Fifth Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 140.
- Al-Sayyid Muḥsin Al-Amīn, A'yān al-Shī'ah, researched by: Ḥasan al-Amīn, Beirut, Dār al-Ta'āruf Lil Maṭbū'āt, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 631 and 636.

[55] Ibn Sa'ad, Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 220.

conditions of the time. Although these discussions were anti-government in both their substance and effect, they still did not arouse the sensitivities of the Umayyids at the time.

The Imam ('a) would expound and clarify upon the concept of the 'Imamate' as a system of Islamic governance and leadership for the entire Muslim society. He would also make the people aware of the current happenings in the society, such as the governance of tyrannical rulers and their governors, as well as their corruption and hypocrisy. He would cause the people to understand that a government led by the likes of Abd al-Malik, was not a government that was acceptable by Islam. Until the people could understand this powerful point, and realize that the Umayyid government was in essence a government which stood against the teachings of Islam, they could never come out of their political and religious stupor; this was a necessary prerequisite to a revolution by the people.

One example of the Imam's ('a) words can be found in the detailed sermons which he would deliver on Fridays at the Prophet's mosque. The following is a portion of a sermon he delivered there: "Oh people, be virtuous and know that you will return to your Lord. On that day (the Day of Judgment), each person will find with them all of what they have done, both good and evil. He will wish that there was a long distance between him and his evil deeds... The first affair that will take place in the grave is that the two angels, Munkar and Nakīr, will ask him the following questions: 'Who is your God that you worship, who is the Prophet that was sent to you, what is the religion that you follow, what is the (heavenly) book that you read, and who is your Imam that you have accepted....?'"[56]

When reading these words, there are a few things which catch one's attention:

---

[56] Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, Tuḥf al-'Uqūl, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt Jamā'at al-Mudarisīn Fī Hawzat al-'Ilmīyah Biqum al-Muqaddasah, 1363 Hijrī Shamsi, p. 249.

- Kulaynī, al-Rawḍat Min al-Kāfī, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, Fourth Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1362 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 72.
- Ṣadūq, Al-'Amālī, Qum, Maṭba'at al-Ḥikmah, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 301 (Al Majlis al-Thānī).

1- The repetition of these words every Friday shows the attention of the Imam ('a) towards them and their importance.
2- It is clear that since the Imam ('a) began his words with the phrase "Oh People...", the listeners were not only from the Shias, but they also included those from among the many diverse segments of the society.
3- Throughout the duration of his speeches, the Imam ('a) would refer to verses of the Holy Quran in both implicit, as well as explicit terms. Here, his words were clearly directed towards the common masses, who did not see Imam Sajjād ('a) as their Imam. Therefore, in order to further prove his arguments, he would support them with hard evidence, as well as analysis and reasoning. If his words were directed purely towards his own followers, the use of such proofs and reasoning would have been unnecessary.[57]

Building a Framework

Another example of the words of the Imam ('a) is a detailed sermon which is narrated by Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī, one of his closest companions. The text of this narration shows that it was delivered in a gathering of the Shias and special followers of the Imam ('a). In the sermon, the following was mentioned:

"May God protect us from the deceit of the oppressors, the injustice of the jealous, and the force of the tyrannical. Oh you who are pious, do not be deceived by the 'Ṭāqūt' and its followers, who are seeking this world with all of its worthless... and short lived pleasures... I swear by my life, that in previous days, you have put events behind you, and you have successfully passed through various calamities, all while putting a distance between yourselves from the deviants, the innovators, and the sinners of this earth. Now you should seek assistance from God,

[57] Ayatollah Khāminiī, Sayyid 'Alī, A Research Into the Life of Imam Sajjād (a), First Edition, Tehran, Daftare Hezbe Jumhūrīye Islāmī, Nashrīye Shomāreye 63, 1361 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 36-38.

and return towards God's obedience and the obedience of the 'Walis' of God, who are more worthy than the current rulers.

...Hold in foremost importance the command of God and the obedience of the ones whom God has made their obedience obligatory. Never hold to the obedience of the 'Ṭāqūt' over the obedience of God and his divinely appointed rulers... Abstain from associating with the sinners, and do not cooperate with the oppressors, and abstain from contact and closeness from the corrupt ones; be wary of their sedition and stay far away from them. Know that whoever exercises opposition to God's 'Awlīyā' and follows a religion other than God's religion, and obstinately acts against the divine rulers, will be entangled in the flames of hell..."[58]

The Deterioration of the Moral Condition of the Muslims

The importance and necessity of the Imam's ('a) guidance and instructions becomes clear in light of the decadence and moral deterioration of the Muslim community during the rule of 'Abd al-Malik and his son Walīd. Moreover, many of the Prophetic traditions and the general Islamic way of life had been forgotten. This deterioration was something which wasn't recent; it had roots which extended far into the past...

From the 30th year Hijrī (the second half of the rule of 'Uthmān), economic, as well as moral corruption increased in the Muslim society. The nobles of the Quraysh had gained large incomes and were benefiting greatly from the caliph's generosity. Naturally, this "generosity" was funded by the Muslim treasury which belonged to the people. This group busied themselves in amassing vast amounts of wealth, and as a result, a general inclination towards a luxurious lifestyle become common in the society. In time, an aristocratic class was born. They amassed wealth, property, and estates, and they

---

[58] Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, Tuḥf al-'Uqūl, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt Jamā'at al-Mudarisīn Fī Ḥawzat al-'Ilmīya Biqum al-Muqaddasah, 1363 Hijrī Shamsi, p. 252.

- Kulaynī, al-Rawḍat Min al-Kāfī, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī, Fourth Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1362 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 15.

purchased many slaves. There was a particular demand for slaves who could sing and participate in banquets. Over time, gatherings with musicians, pleasure seeking, and singing became ubiquitous in the society.

These moral deviations became so prevalent during Yazīd's reign that even the most holy cities of Islam (Mecca and Medina) were not protected from them. Masʿūdī has written: "The corruption and immorality of Yazīd spread to his officials and advisors. During his rule, singing and music took place publicly in Mecca and Medina, and people openly engaged in drinking wine."[59]

This situation likewise continued during ʿAbd al-Malik's rule. Shawqī Ḍayf has described the prevalence of a super wealthy class and a culture of luxury-seeking in the cities of Mecca and Medina. He has mentioned that: "It seems as if these two big cities of the Ḥijāz were constructed for the musicians; things have reached the point that not only would the ordinary people go to their gatherings, but jurisprudents and ascetics would also be present there!"[60] Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf would say to some of the citizens of Medina: "Oh people of Medina, your situation with these singers is indeed astonishing because everyone from both the upper and the lower classes attend."[61] The atmosphere of Medina had become such that "neither the scholars would consider singing unlawful, nor would the worshippers refrain from it."[62]

It is narrated that one day, a singer named Daḥmān went in front of a judge in Medina by the name of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Makhzūmī because of a dispute between a citizen of Medina and an Iraqi. He gave his testimony to the benefit of the citizen of Medina, and the judge considered him as a just individual

---

[59] Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 67.

[60] Tārīkh al-Adab al-ʿArabī (al-Aṣr al-ʿAbbāsī), Old Print, Egypt, Dār al-Maʿārif, vol. 2, p. 347.

[61] Ibn 'Abdurabih, al-ʿUqd al-Farīd, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 6, p. 11.

- Sharīf Qarshī, Bāqir, The Life of Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (a), First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Aḍaw', 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 409.

[62] Abū al-Faraj Iṣfihānī, al-'Aghānī, Beirut, Dārl Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 8, p. 225.

and accepted his testimony. The Iraqi man said to the judge: "This is Daḥmān!" ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz replied: "I know who he is—if I didn't know of his identity, I would have asked him." The Iraqi man responded: "He is a musician and a singer, and he teaches the slaves how to sing." The judge replied: "May God have mercy on you and us! Which one of us is not familiar with singing? Now go and give this man his due."[63]

In Medina, there would be gatherings of dancing and singing without any curtains being placed between the men and the women.[64] It has been narrated in the books of history that ʿĀ'ishah, the daughter of Ṭalḥah, would compose music and 'Izzat al-Maylā' would sing.[65]

Things reached a point that when the most famous female singer of that time, Jamīlah, was on a trip to Mecca, she was given such a grand reception on that journey that it has no precedence in Islamic history. No jurisprudent, commentator, narrator of tradition, judge, or ascetic has ever before been treated in such a matter. The story of this journey has been narrated as follows:

"When Jamīlah left Medina to go towards Mecca for the Ḥajj pilgrimage, a group of the famous male and female singers saw her off and a group of them accompanied her until the very end of her journey. When Jamīlah's caravan arrived near Mecca, she was welcomed warmly by the nobles and other important personalities of the city. When she returned back to Medina, she was welcomed by the city nobles, and there was such excitement and fervor, that the people of the city lined up from their doors to watch."[66]

This historical excerpt shows a small window into the moral decay and deterioration of the Medinan society during that

---

[63] Abū al-Faraj Iṣfihānī, al-'Aghānī, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 6, p. 21.

[64] Sharīf Qarshī, Bāqir, The Life of Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (a), First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Aḍaw', 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 410.

[65] Sharīf Qarshī, Bāqir, The Life of Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn (a), First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Aḍaw', 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 411.

[66] Abū al-Faraj Iṣfihānī, al-'Aghānī, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 8, p. 208-210.
- Kaḥālah, 'Umar Riḍā, 'I'lām al-Nisā, Fifth Edition, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1404 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 211-214.

time period. The people who escorted Jamīlah during her trip were the most famous singers of their time and they were renowned throughout the nation. As for how numerous they were in number, if we take into consideration that each of them had at least a few students, and that at least some of the singers stayed behind in the city and did not see her off, then we will be left with a number that is hard to believe. When the condition of the most holy city of the Muslim nation was such, then we can imagine what the condition of the other cities was like, particularly in far off provinces like Damascus or Egypt, which had converted to Islam at a much later period.[67]

The Necessity of Spreading Pure Islamic Teachings

The situation during the time of the Fourth Imam ('a) was truly regretful; the people had little knowledge of Islamic teachings and religious deviations had begun to appear in a very frightening manner. It was through a deep and comprehensive understanding of these issues that the Imam ('a) would exert his utmost efforts in teaching the people the correct manner of Islamic life and in awakening them to its realities. For a further understanding of how bad the situation had become, let us look t a few examples of how unaware the people were in regards to heir religious duties:

1- According to some scholars, during the time of Imam Sajjād ('a), the Hashimites did not know how to pray correctly or how to properly perform the Ḥajj pilgrimage. It is clear that if the Hashimites were unaware of these matters, the rest of the Shias were in even worse shape religiously.[68]

When we are faced with an environment in which the correct manner of prayers are forgotten by the people, and in particular amongst the Banī Hāshim, when they should have been the foremost amongst the Muslims, this shows the deep

---

[67] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Life of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a), First Print, Tehran, The Publications Office of Islamic Culture, 1365 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 104.

[68] Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-'Āmulī, Ja'far, Dirāsāt wa Biḥūth Fī Tārīkh wa al-Islam, (Majmū'ah Maqālāt) 1400 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 56 (Maqālah: al-Imām al-Sajjād Ba'ith al-Islām Min Jadīd).

extent of the moral decline and deterioration of the overall society. In particular, if Mecca and Medina were this hard hit, then other cities, which were farther away and had been influenced by Islam at a much later date, were naturally in even worse shape.

2- Anas ibn Mālik, the famous companion, is quoted as having said: "From the things which were commonplace during the time of the Prophet (ṣ), nothing has been left." The people said: "Then what about the prayers?" He replied: "Then what was it that you did during the prayers?"[69]

3- During the reign of Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, in the year 87 Hijrī, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (the governor of Medina at the time), went to the Ḥajj pilgrimage as the Emir of the Ḥajj. In spite of his high position within the government, he did the ritual of the Wuqūf incorrectly during the ʿĪd of the Sacrifice.[70]

4- Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb Zuhrī is quoted as having said: "In Damascus, we went to see Anas ibn Mālik. We found him alone and crying. We asked him the reason as to why he was crying, and he responded: 'From all of the things that I learned about Islam, the only thing which I know to be left is these prayers, and even that has become ruined.'"

5- In the time after Anas, Ḥasan Baṣri is narrated as having said: "If the Messenger of God (ṣ) returns back to your midst, of all the things which he taught you, the 'Qiblah' is the only thing which he will recognize."[71]

3- Teaching Spirituality through Supplications

Another method which the Fourth Imam (ʿa) used to educate the masses and combat the Umayyid government's

---

[69] Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Āmulī, Jaʿfar, Dirāsāt wa Biḥūth Fī Tārīkh wa al-Islām, (Majmuʿah Muqallāt) 1400 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 56.
- Amīn, Aḥmad, Ḍuḥ al-Islām, Old Print, Cairo, Maktabah al- Nihḍat al-Miṣrīyah, vol. 1, p. 365 (narrated from Būkhārī and Tirmidhī - The Bāb of ʿItisām al-Sunnah).

[70] Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, The History of the Caliphs, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Third Edition, Cairo, Maṭbaʾat al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 224.

[71] Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Āmulī, Jaʿfar, Dirāsāt wa Biḥūth Fī Tārīkh wa al-Islam, (Majmūʿah Muqallāt) 1400 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 57.

influence, was the teaching of spirituality through the use of supplications. It is known that supplications are a medium that link human beings with their Creator. When these supplications are recited, there are powerful spiritual and physical effects. From the Islamic perspective, supplications have a very important and special status in the religion. If we were to collect all of the supplications from the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and the Imams ('a), we would have a very large and comprehensive collection. These supplications are an important educational and spiritual university which allow people to grow and mature as human beings.

The Collection of Sajjādīyah

As mentioned previously, Imam Sajjād ('a) lived in a very restricted social and political environment and so the Imam ('a) used the medium of supplications in order to spread various religious teachings and create change in the Muslim society. These supplications did not have overt political content and so they would remain undetected from the roving eyes of the government. The collection of Imam Sajjād's ('a) supplications are famously known as 'Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah' in Arabic. After the Holy Quran and the Nahj al-Balāghah, the Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah is considered as being the most important treasure trove of Islamic wisdom. In past times, this collection was also known by the names of 'Ukht al-Quran', 'Injīl Ahl al-Bayt', and 'Zubūr Āalī Muḥammad' by various scholars.[72]

The collection of Sajjādīyah is not only a collection of requests from God but it is, in reality, a limitless ocean of Islamic knowledge and spiritual secrets which contain ideological, cultural, social, and political teachings. It also contains natural laws, as well as religious rules and guidelines. All of these are contained in the format of supplications and entreaties to God. What is interesting about this collection is

---

[72] Madanī, Sayyid Alikhān, Riyaḍ al-Sālikīn Fī Sharḥ Saḥīfat Sayyid al-Sājidīn, Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, Muqadamah, p. 4-5.
- Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Ma'ālim al-Ulamā, Najaf, al-Mathba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1380 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 125 and 131.

that at first glance, one would fail to see these deeper aspects and assume that one is just reading a simple prayer.

In the year 1353 Hijrī, the late Ayatollah Marʿashī Najafī sent a copy of the text to ʿAllāmah Ṭanṭāwī, who was the Mufti of Egypt. ʿAllāmah Ṭanṭāwī thanked him for sending him the present, and then replied with the following: "This is our own personal misfortune, that until the present time, we have not known about this great work which is from the inheritance of the Prophet (ṣ). When I look at it, I find its words superior to the words of the creation, and inferior to the words of the Creator."[73]

Due to the importance and veracity of the Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah, many commentaries have been written on it throughout history, both in Arabic, as well as in Farsi. The late ʿAllāmah Shaykh Āghā Buzurg Tehrānī, in his book Al-Dhurīʿah, has mentioned over 50 commentaries (not including the translations) that have been written on the Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah.[74] In addition to these commentaries, a number of scholars, both past and present, have completed many translations on the Saḥīfah'; a number of these have been published in recent years.

The Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah contains 54 supplications whose respective titles have been listed below:

1- In praise of God
2- Sending benedictions on Muḥammad (ṣ) and his family (ʿa)
3- Sending benedictions on the angels who bear the "Throne of God"
4- Requesting mercy on the followers of the Prophet (ṣ)
5- Imam Sajjād's (ʿa) supplication for himself and his companions
6- A supplication for the time of morning and evening

---

[73] Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah, translated by: Sayyid al-Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ṣadr Balaghi, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, Muqadamah, p. 37.

[74] Shaykh Agha Buzurg, Ibid, vol. 3, p. 345-359.
In regards to the chain of narrators of the Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah, please refer to: Sayyid Alikhān Madanī, Riyāḍ al-Sālikīn Fī Sharḥ Ṣahifat al-Sayyid al-Sājidīn, Muqadamah, ʿAbd Razzāq Mūsawī al-Muqqaram, al-Imām Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, Qum, Dār al-Shabastarī Lil Maṭbūʿāt, p. 95-118.

7- Imam Sajjād's ('a) supplication at the time of important events and occurrences, as well as during the time of sadness and grief
8- In fleeing towards God, away from improper behavior, as well as improper actions and deeds
9- On eagerness towards seeking forgiveness
10- On seeking sanctuary in the presence of God
11- On seeking a goodly end
12- On confessing one's sins and seeking repentance
13- On asking one's desires from God
14- On complaining (protesting) against oppressors at the time of being subject to oppression or seeing an act of oppression
15- In times of illness or the occurrence of grief and difficulty
16- In seeking forgiveness for one's sins and faults
17- In repelling the evil of Satan, and taking protection with God against Satan's enmity and deceit
18- A supplication for after a danger has been eliminated and for when a request has been answered speedily
19- In requesting rain during a time of famine and drought
20- In seeking praiseworthy behavior and actions
21- A supplication during the time of sorrow and grief
22- A supplication during the time of difficulties, problems, nd hardship
3- In seeking prosperity, and thanking and praising God for it
24- The Imam's supplication for his mother and father
25- A supplication for one's children
26- In regards to one's neighbors and friends
27- A supplication for the frontier guards
28- In seeking sanctuary with God
29- A supplication for when one's sustenance is straitened
30- In seeking God's help for paying back one's debts
31- In reciting the words of repentance (dhikr) and seeking repentance from God
32- A supplication after the night prayer
33- In seeking the best
34- A supplication in times of trouble, and in times of seeing someone who has been entangled in the disgrace of sin

35- A supplication for contentment at the time of seeing the wealthy
36- A supplication at the time of seeing lightning and hearing thunder
37- A supplication in confessing one's inability to truly thank God for his blessings and of one's everlasting indebtedness
38- In apologizing to God for ones lack in paying back the people's rights and dues
39- In seeking forgiveness and mercy.
40- A supplication in times when someone becomes aware of another person's death, or when he remembers death itself
41- In seeking the concealment of sins and protection from sins
42- During the time of completing the recitation of the Quran
43- In times of sighting the crescent moon
44- A supplication for the beginning of the month of Ramaḍān
45- A supplication for the end of the month of Ramaḍān
46- A supplication for the days of 'Īd al-Fitr and Friday
47- A supplication for the day of 'Arafah (the 9th of Dhu al-Ḥijjah)
48- A supplication for the days of 'Īd al-Qurbān and Friday
49- A supplication for the elimination of the deceit of enemies
50- On the fear of God
51- On supplication and weeping
52- In persistence on seeking from God
53- On one's humility in the presence of God
54- In seeking the removal of griefs and sorrows[75]

The Political Aspects of Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah

The Saḥīfah' Sajjādīyah is not only a book of supplications and entreaties to God— it also contains various political, social, ideological, and cultural facets as well. In these supplications, Imam Sajjād ('a) has mentioned many issues, including that of the imamate and the leadership of the Muslim society. Let us

[75] Mutawakil ibn Hārūn (the narrator of the Saḥīfah') has said: "These duas were 75 in number; eleven of which were lost, while the other sixty or so were preserved."

take a look at several such examples:

1- In the 20th supplication (Makārim al-Akhlāq), the Imam ('a) is quoted as having said: "Oh Allah, bless Muḥammad and his household, appoint for me a hand against he who wrongs me, a tongue against he who disputes with me and a victory over he who stubbornly resists me. Give me guile against he who schemes against me, power over he who oppresses me, refutation over he who reviles me, and safety from he who threatens me..."

The people mentioned in this supplication are none other than the government officials of 'Abd al-Malik, such as Hishām ibn Ismā'īl Makhzūmī, the governor of Medina. The Imam ('a) was subject to their oppression and these supplications gave him (and his followers) a means of divine protection against their enemies. In addition to this element of divine protection, this supplication of the Imam ('a) was a public complaint and protest against the oppressive and tyrannical Ummayid government. It, therefore, contained some very potent political overtones and whomever read such a supplication could not help but feel the seeds of rebellion and revolution being planted in their hearts.

2- In the supplication which the Imam ('a) would recite on the ay of 'Īd al-Qurbān[76] and on Friday, the following is ıentioned: "...Oh Lord, this station (referring to the caliphate ınd the leadership of the Muslim community) is exclusive to your deputies and selected ones; these stations belong to your trustees, whom you have placed in high rank. Yet the oppressors have taken possession of it through force... and thus your chosen ones and caliphs have been defeated and overcome. All of this is while they see that your religious precepts have been changed, your book has been removed from the practical realm, the religious duties and obligations have been distorted, and the 'Sunnah' of the Prophet (ṣ) has been discontinued. Oh Lord, remove your mercy from the enemies of your chosen servants, from the first ones and the last ones, and likewise their

[76] The 'Id of the Sacrifice.

followers and all those who are satisfied with their actions..."

In this supplication, the Imam ('a) explicitly mentions the issues of the imamate and the leadership of the Muslim nation, which is specific to the descendants of the Prophet. He also mentions its usurpation by the oppressors and rejects the legitimacy of the Umayyid government.

3- In the supplication of the Day of 'Arafah, the Imam ('a) said: "My Lord, bless the best household, those whom you have chosen for your command, appointed the treasurers of your knowledge, the guardians of your religion, the vicegerents on your earth, and your proof against your servants, purified from uncleanliness and pollution, through a purification by your decree, and made the mediation to you, and the road to your paradise... Oh God, surely you have confirmed your religion in all times with an Imam whom you have set up as a guidepost to your servants and a lighthouse in your lands, after you linked him to yourself through an unseen connection. You have appointed him the means to your good pleasure, made obeying him obligatory and cautioned against disobeying him. (You have) commanded (that the people) follow his commands, abandon what he prohibits, and stipulated that no one should go ahead of him and that no one should fall behind him in obedience."

In this supplication, the Imam ('a) draws out the role and special position of the Imams and divine rulers from the Family of the Prophet. He also speaks of their distinctions, and this again negates the legitimacy of the ruling Umayyid government.

4- The Struggle against Government Scholars

One of the most dramatic parts of the lives of the Imams ('a), was their struggle against the illegitimate government "experts" in the field of religion. These individuals had taken on the guise of jurisprudents, narrators of tradition, commentators, judges, and reciters of the Holy Quran. These were people who would mold and shape the minds of the

masses in favor of the oppressive powers that ruled over them. In essence, they aided the Umayyid, and later on, the ʿAbbāsid governments, in strenghtening their rule. Through them, the people became obedient and submissive towards their rulers through a type of mental and psychological conditioning. Religion was the main vehicle used to create these changes in the society. One example of this is found in the Fourth Imam's (ʿa) clash against one of the government sponsored narrators of tradition by the name of Muḥammad ibn Muslim Zuhrī (58-124 Hijrī).

Who was Zuhrī?

Zuhrī was one of the 'Tābiʿīn'[77] and jurisprudents of his time. He was considered to be one of the great narrators of tradition in the city of Medina and he had taken in the knowledge of the seven great jurisprudents of the Sunni world. He was also known for having personally met ten of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ). His knowledge and standing was such that a large group of the famous jurisprudents and narrators, narrated traditions from him.[78]

Based on this foundation of scholarly knowledge and earning, Zuhrī was well respected and had acquired considerable fame and popularity in various jurisprudential and scholarly circles. His popularity reached a point where Mālik ibn Anas has narrated: "In Medina, I only saw one jurisprudent and narrator, and he was Ibn Shihāb Zuhrī."[79] Another example of this is found in a story when Makḥūl was asked: "Who is the most knowledgeable man that you have ever seen?" He responded: "Zuhrī." He was then asked: "And after him?" Again, he responded: "Zuhrī." He was asked again: "And after him?" Once again, he replied: "Zuhrī." For the final time he was asked: "And after him?" Again, he replied: "Zuhrī."[80]

---

[77] The companions of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ).

[78] Ḥajj Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī, Safīnat al-Biḥār, Tehran, Sanāʾī Bookstore, vol. 1, p. 573.

[79] Muḥammad ibn Saʿad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 2, p. 388.

[80] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 343.

Even with all of these positive points, Zuhrī was captivated by the scholarly greatness, ascetism, and piety of Imam Sajjād (ʿa). He was additionally captivated by his spiritual rank and station. Zuhrī is quoted as saying: "I have seen no Qurayshī personality more pious or superior to ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa)." He would also say: "The best[81] and most learned individual of the Hāshimī clan... is ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa)."[82] Whenever Zuhrī would remember Imam Sajjād (ʿa), he would weep, and call him by the agnomen of Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, or the adornment of the worshippers.[83] Zuhrī also benefitted tremendously from the Fourth Imam (ʿa) and narrated a great number of traditions from him.[84]

Zuhrī was a local ruler on behalf of the Umayyids for a period of time during his life. During this time, he punished an individual and the man passed away as a consequence of the punishment. Zuhrī was shaken by this incident, and he left his home and set up a tent in the desert, saying: "After this, I will never live underneath the shade of a roof again."

One day, Imam Sajjād (ʿa) saw him and said to him: "Your hopelessness from the forgiveness of your Lord is worse than your sin; fear God and repent to him, pay the compensation money to the family of the deceased, and then return to your family." Zuhrī, in spite of his great knowledge and learning, had been ignorant of this, and he became overjoyed at this guidance from the Imam (ʿa). After this incident, he would oftentimes say: "I am indebted to ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, more than I am indebted to any other individual."[85]

---

[81] Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, p. 104.

[82] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Manāqib Āali Abī Ṭālib, researched and edited by: Sayyid Hāshim Rasūl Mahallātī, Qum, ʿAllāmah Publications, vol. 4, p. 159.

[83] ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā ʾIrbilī, Kashf al-Ghammah Fī Marifat al-ʾA'immah, edited by: Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī, Tabriz, Maktabah Banī Hāshimī, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 288.

[84] For further information on these narrations, refer to:
- Biḥār al-ʾAnwār, Second Edition, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1394 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 46, p. 57, 64, 65, 73, 72, 107, and 150.
- Iḥtijāj Ṭabarsī, Najaf, Maṭba'at al-Nu'man, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 51.
- Al-Istibṣār, Second Edition, Najaf, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1375 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 80.

[85] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Manāqib Āali Abī Ṭālib, researched and edited by: Sayyid Hāshim

Zuhrī as Imam Sajjād's Student

The beliefs and religious persuasion of Zuhrī are subject to controversy and disagreement amongst the Shia scholars. Some consider him as a Shia and have introduced him as a follower of Imam Sajjād ('a). These scholars have their own specific reasoning for this. Other scholars have considered him as an enemy of the Imams ('a), and a supporter of the Umayyid government, and have criticized him as a result.

The compiler of Rawḍāt al-Jannāt has proposed a middle path between these two possibilities. He is quoted as saying the following: "At first, (Zuhrī) was one of the supporters of the Umayyids, and one of their functionaries. Later on, due to his knowledge and awareness, he found the true path, and broke relations with the Umayyids, entering the circle of the followers and students of Imam Sajjād ('a)."[86]

In spite of this, there is much historical evidence and testimony which shows that during Zuhrī's youth, he had contact with Imam Sajjād ('a) and benefitted from his school of thought, but that during later times, he was drawn towards the Umayyid government and began serving as one of their functionaries and agents. Due to his past history, the Umayyids would sometimes taunt him and ask: "How is your prophet 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a)) doing these days?"[87] Below, we will briefly review the evidence of Zuhrī's connection with the Umayyids and how he served as one of their functionaries.

Zuhrī as a Functionary of the Umayyid Government

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd counts Zuhrī as one of the opponents of

Rasūl Mahallātī, Qum, 'Allāmah Publications, vol. 4, p. 59.

- 'Alī ibn 'Īsā 'Irbilī, Kashf al-Ghammah Fī Marifat al-'A'immah, edited by: Sayyid Hāshim Rasūlī, Tabriz, Maktabah Banī Hāshimī, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 319-320.

[86] Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Mūsawī Khansārī Iṣfihānī, Rawḍāt al-Jannāt Fī Aḥwāl al-Ulamā wa al-Sādāt, Qum, Ismā'īlian Publications, 1392 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 7, p. 245; In regards to the other side of this argument, please refer to: Ḥajj Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī, Safīnat al-Biḥār, Tehran, Sanaei Bookstore, vol. 1, p. 573; Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Tastarī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, vol. 8, p. 387...

[87] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Manāqib Āali Abī Ṭālib, researched and edited by: Sayyid Hāshim Rasūl Mahallātī, Qum, 'Allāmah Publications, vol. 4, p. 159.

Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), and has written: "One day ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn (ʿa) heard that Zuhrī and ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr were sitting in the Mosque of the Prophet and slandering Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). He went to the mosque, stood over them, and harshly denounced them."[88]

During the rule of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, Zuhrī departed towards the city of Damascus in order to benefit from the wealth and comfort which the Umayyid government offered. When he arrived, he used his education and knowledge as a stepping stone for greater material wealth and official titles. He soon attracted ʿAbd al-Malik's attention, and ʿAbd al-Malik set aside a monthly stipend for him from the public treasury. He also paid off his debts and placed a personal servant at his disposal. In this manner, Zuhrī positioned himself as one of the government scholars who served the cause of the Ummayid caliph.[89]

Ibn Saʿad has written that: "The person who initiated Zuhrī into the service of ʿAbd al-Malik was Qubayṣah ibn Dhū'ayb, the exclusive seal bearer of the government."[90] It was from this point onwards that Zuhrī included himself as one of the functionaries of the Umayyid rulers. Zuhrī was to taste the pleasures of affluence and a luxurious lifestyle as a government scholar under ʿAbd al-Malik, and after him, he served under later caliphs such as Walīd, Sulaymān, Yazīd, Hishām, as well as ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

From these later caliphs, Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik selected Zuhrī to a position in the judiciary. After Yazīd, he was treated very well by the government of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, and Hishām selected him as the personal teacher of his children. Zuhrī continued on this path until the very end of his life.[91] In

---

[88] Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Qum, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, vol. 4, p. 102.

[89] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 341 and 346.

[90] Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 7, p. 447.

[91] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 341.

- Ibn Khallakān, Wafīyāt al-Aʿyān, researched by: Doctor Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Second Edition,

addition, Hishām paid off 80,000 dirhams which Zuhrī had accrued in debt.[92]

Ibn Sa'ad has further written: "Zuhrī went to where Hishām lived in Riṣāfah, and for a period of 20 years before this, he lived with the Umayyids."[93] Likewise, Ibn Sa'ad has narrated from Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah that: "In the year 123 Hijrī, Zuhrī came to Mecca with Hishām (the caliph of that time), and resided there until the year 124 Hijrī."[94]

Zuhrī had become so comfortable with his courtly life of ease, luxury, and comfort that when he was asked to begin teaching the people during the later part of his life, he refused in a very telling manner. He was asked: "How we wish that now, in the last years of your life, you would take up residence in the city of Medina, and go and sit at one of the pillars in the Mosque of the Prophet and begin to teach the people." He responded by saying: "If I were to do such a thing, it would be very difficult for me. In addition, this type of work is not advisable for me unless I turn my back on this world, and reach out and grasp for the hereafter."[95]

The Caliph's Need for Government Scholars

In order for tyrannical and un-Islamic caliphs to rule over a Muslim population, it is imperative for them to gain the people's acceptance of their actions as being legitimate and Islamic in nature. During this point in Islamic history, quite some time had passed since the religion had first been revealed, and people were relatively strong in their faith. If they were to find out that their government, which ruled over them in the name of Islam, was in fact un-Islamic and against all of the values which the Prophet (ṣ) had introduced them, then the

---

Qum, Manshūrāt al-Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 4, p. 178.

[92] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 343.

[93] Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 7, p. 474.

[94] Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 497.

[95] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 348.

people would not cooperate with these governments.

Without the people's support, these governments would not last very long and they would soon fall. While not every individual in the Muslim community cared for the legitimacy of their government, there were a very sizeable number who did, and this group only accepted the un-Islamic actions of the government based on their mistaken beliefs that whatever the government did was religiously legitimate.

Therefore, the caliphs worked to legitimize their rule through gathering scholars and narrators of tradition and inducing them to join their government. Once they had gathered these scholars into their court, they would have them fabricate various traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) and his companions. These traditions were made in a way where they were in favor of the caliphs and their corrupt ways. Through these means, they prepared the mental and ideological foundations for the acceptance of their rule in the minds and hearts of the Muslims.[96]

The goal of the Umayyid government in hiring Zuhrī was to use his religious position and the status which he held in the collective mind of the masses. Zuhrī accepted this arrangement and put himself completely at their service. He began writing books in their favor and fabricating narrations. In this way, he proved himself to be a great support for the Umayyid government.

An individual by the name of 'Mu'amar' has written: "We assumed that we had narrated a great number of traditions from Zuhrī, and this went on until Walīd, the son of 'Abd al-Malik, was killed. After he was killed, we saw a large number of books that were being carried by beasts of burden, and these books were coming out of Walīd's treasury. They said: 'This is from the knowledge of Zuhrī.'[97] Zuhrī had written so many

---

[96] (Ayatollah) Khāminiī, Sayyid 'Alī, A Research Into the Life of Imam Sajjād (a), First Print, Tehran, Daftare Hizbe Jumhūriye Islāmī, Nashrīye Shomāraye 63, 1361 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 56.

[97] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 346.
- Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 2, p. 389.

books, and filled so many notebooks for Walīd, that when they needed to move them, they had no choice but to use beasts of burden to do so!"

Zuhrī himself is quoted as saying: "In the beginning, we did not like to write down and compose our knowledge. This continued until the rulers encouraged us in this field (so that our knowledge would be recorded in books), and thereafter, we decided that no Muslim should be deprived from them."[98] Ibn Kathīr has written: "The person who encouraged Zuhrī in writing down traditions was Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. From that day when Zuhrī began to write down (traditions), the people also began to write down traditions."[99]

One day, Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik wanted Zuhrī to teach his children various traditions. When Zuhrī heard this, he requested a scribe, and he then dictated 400 traditions to him, which he wrote down.[100] ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, in the lines of a directive, was found to have written: "Do not be inattentive in narrating and writing down traditions from Zuhrī, for no one is left who is as knowledgeable and learned as he in matters of the past Sunnah (the Prophetic (ṣ) way of life)."[101]

Shamsh al-Dīn Dhahabī, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, Beirut, Dār al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 2, p. 112.

[8] Muḥammad ibn Saʿad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 2, p. 389.

- Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 341.

[99] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 341.

[100] Ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, First Edition, Haydarabād Dukān, 1326 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 9, p. 449.

- Shamsh al-Dīn Dhahabī, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, Beirut, Dār al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 1, p. 110.

[101] Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 343.

The prohibition of narrating and writing down traditions was initiated during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn Khaṭṭāb, upon his orders. This prohibition continued until the end of the first century Hijrī. During the rule of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, this prohibition was officially discontinued. Islamic historians believe that this prohibition was enacted due to political reasons, in order to block certain books of tradition which had been composed by Imam ʿAlī (a). From the early days of Islam, Imam ʿAlī (a) had been gathering and compiling various traditions, as well as other knowledge which the Prophet (s) had narrated. The narration of these traditions was not to the benefit of the caliph of the time, for each of these traditions was in reality a testament to the truthfulness of Imam ʿAlī (a). Therefore, ʿUmar prohibited the narration, composition,

The Fabricated Traditions of Zuhrī

Zuhrī fabricated many traditions in favor of the Umayyids, and in this way, he justified their illegitimate rule and their various policies. In addition, he fabricated traditions which were against the Hāshimīs. Let us examine a few such examples:
1- Zuhrī claimed that the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) had said: "One should not set out on a journey except to go to one of these three mosques: the Mosque of the Ḥaram, my Mosque (in Medina), or the Al-Aqṣā Mosque; and the Al-Aqṣā Mosque has the same verdict as the Ḥaram Mosque."[102]

A similar tradition has been narrated by Mūslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Nisā'ī (three of the famous Sunni narrators) without any of them narrating the last part of the tradition: "and the al-Aqṣā Mosque has the same verdict as the Ḥaram Mosque." Therefore, we have three authoritative Sunni scholars who all quoted the same tradition, in the very same manner, without quoting the last part of it.[103]

It is clear that this tradition, with the last part fabricated, was created by Zuhrī under the orders of 'Abd al-Malik. The reasons behind its fabrication go back to the time of 'Abdullah ibn Zubayr, who ruled over the region of the Ḥijāz, where the holy city of Mecca was located. 'Abd al-Malik gained power in the region of Syria, and between these two rulers, a fierce military and political conflict developed. Whenever the people of Syria wished to go on the Ḥajj pilgrimage, they inevitably had to stay for at least a few days in Mecca (which was under

---

and collection of all traditions in an absolute way. Historians have clearly shown that this prohibition was due to political reasons and, at the same time, the removal of the prohibition was also a political act by the likes of Hishām. In spite of this, the Shia did not take the prohibition of traditions seriously, and immediately after the death of the Prophet (ṣ), they began to collect all the authentic traditions that they could find. They were therefore the first to do so amongst the Muslims.

[102] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Ya'qūbī, edited by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 8.

[103] Ṣaḥīḥ Mūslim, Cairo, Maktabah Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ, vol. 4, (The Book of Ḥajj), p. 126.
- Sunan Abī Dāwūd, researched and edited by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, (The Book of Ḥajj), p. 216.
- Sunan Nisā'ī Bisharḥ Suyūṭī, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 2, p. 37 and 38.

the rule of ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr at that time). ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr would use this opportunity to propagate against the rule of ʿAbd al-Malik.

Under this threat, ʿAbd al-Malik did not want the people of Syria to go on the Ḥajj pilgrimage and be negatively influenced by ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr's propaganda. This would, in effect, delegitimize his rule. Therefore, he went ahead and banned the Ḥajj pilgrimage entirely. The people began to protest against this action, which prohibited them from one of their religious obligations. As an answer to these protests, ʿAbd al-Malik responded by saying: "Ibn Shihāb Zuhrī has narrated from the Prophet (ṣ), who said: 'One should not set out on a journey, except to go to one of these three mosques: the mosque of the Ḥaram, my mosque (in Medina), or the Al-Aqṣā mosque; and the Al-Aqṣā mosque has the same verdict as the Ḥaram mosque.' Then ʿAbd al-Malik said: 'And this is the very same stone that the Prophet of God (ṣ) put his foot over on the night of the Mi'raj, and it takes the place of the Kaaba.'"

Upon the orders of ʿAbd al-Malik, a dome was also constructed over that stone, silk curtains were hung around it, caretakers were selected, and the people began to circumambulate around it. This custom remained for the entire period of the Ummayid rule.[104]

The reason behind the fabrication of the last part of this tradition by Zuhrī was to prevent people from going to the Ḥajj pilgrimage, which was under the control of ʿAbd al-Malik's rival, ʿAbdullah ibn Zubayr. Instead of going to the Ḥajj pilgrimage, the people would turn their attention towards Palestine, which was under ʿAbd al-Malik's control. As a result of this, ʿAbd al-Malik's power and control over his subjects would increase.

2- In order to lessen the people's hatred towards the family of Marwān, and in order to destroy the Fourth Imam's (ʿa) status, Zuhrī has mentioned the following in one of his narrations

---

[104] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Yaʿqūbī, edited by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Najaf, al-Maṭba'at al-Ḥaydarīa, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 8.

about the Imam (ʿa): "'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn was the most moderate individual from his family, and he was the most obedient and loved by Marwān and ʿAbd al-Malik."[105] This was while the hatred of the Marwanids towards the descendants of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was not hidden from anyone and vice versa. Therefore, by saying that the Fourth Imam (ʿa) was obedient towards the Marwanids is hardly believable, much less to say that he was the most obedient individual from his family towards them.

3- Zuhrī has narrated from ʿĀ'ishah that she said: "One day I was with the Prophet of God (ṣ) when I saw ʿAbbās and ʿAlī coming. The Messenger of God (ṣ) said: "Ā'ishah, these two individuals will die in a state where they are not of my religion.'"[106]

It is apparent that this tradition has been fabricated in order to lessen the lofty rank of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and to please the Marwanids. It is interesting to note that Zuhrī has narrated this tradition from ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr, who narrated from ʿĀ'ishah, who in turn was well known for her hatred of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Furthermore, we know that ʿUrwah was one of the enemies of the family of the Prophet. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd explains this by saying: "He, much like Abū Hurayrah, ʿAmr ibn ʿAās, and Mughayrah ibn Shuʿbah were amongst the functionaries of Mūʿāwīya who fabricated traditions against Imam ʿAlī (ʿa)."[107]

4- Zuhrī narrates: "One time, the Prophet of God (ṣ) entered the house of ʿAlī and Fāṭimah during the night, and said to them: 'Do you not pray?' ʿAlī replied: 'This is up to God— if he wishes, he will select us for this (action).' When the Prophet (ṣ) heard this, he did not say anything and returned. During this time, ʿAlī heard the Prophet (ṣ) striking his leg and saying: 'More than anything else, human beings engage in dispute[108]

---

[105] Muḥammad ibn Saʿad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 215.
- Also refer to: Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 9, p. 106.

[106] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, researched by: Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Qum, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, vol. 4, p. 63.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Surah Kahf, Verse 54.

and polemics."[109]

Through fabricating and narrating this tradition, Zuhrī attempted to paint Imam ʿAlī as a person who believes in predestination, as well as an individual who engages in frivolous disputes.

5- Zuhrī narrates from Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) that he said: "I had an old camel that the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) had given to me from the war booty of the Battle of Badr. When I wished to get married to Fāṭimah (ʿa), the daughter of the Prophet (ṣ), I arranged with a man (who was a dyer of goods by trade) from the tribe of Banī Qaynuqā, so that he would come with me to the wilderness and assist me in gathering the herb 'Azkhar'. I would then bring this herb and sell them to the dyers, in order to pay for the cost of the wedding banquet (Walīmah).

In anticipation of this, I became busy in preparing the camel saddles, their gunny sacks, ropes, and other such items, and I stabled the camels next to one of the homes of the Anṣār. When I came back, I saw that the camel's humps had been cut off, their flanks had been cleaved, and their livers had been pulled out! When I saw this sight, I became exceedingly disturbed and said: 'Who has done such a thing?' The people said: 'This is the work of Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. He was ngaged with a group of the Anṣār in drinking, and slaves were usy singing to them. Ḥamzah came out of this gathering, picked up his sword, and cut off the humps of the camels, cleaving their flanks, and pulling out their livers.'

ʿAlī (ʿa) then said: 'I went to see the Prophet (ṣ), and I saw that Zayd ibn Ḥāritha was with him.' The Prophet (ṣ) saw how disturbed I looked and asked: 'What has happened?' I said: 'I have never seen an act so ugly before; Ḥamzah has done such and such with my camels, and right now he is in a house with a group, busy drinking.'

---

[109] Būkhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Būkhārī, Cairo, Maktabah ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Ḥanafī, vol. 9 (Kitāb al-'Itiṣām Bil Kitāb wa al-Sunnah), p. 106.
- Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, Ajūbah Masā'il Jārallah, Second Edition, Ṣaydā, Maṭba'at al-Irfān, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 69.
- Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ḥilyat al-Aw'līyā, Fifth Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 143.

The Prophet (ṣ) put on some clothes and left his house. Zayd ibn Ḥārithah and I followed him. The Prophet (ṣ) entered the house that Ḥamzah was in and began to reprimand and rebuke him. I saw that Ḥamzah was intoxicated and his eyes had become red. When this took place, Ḥamzah looked at the Prophet (ṣ) and after measuring him with his gaze, said: 'Are you not one of my father's servants?' The Prophet (ṣ) saw that Ḥamzah was intoxicated and returned to his home. We also left the house alongside him."[110]

Through the fabrication of this preposterous tradition, Zuhrī wished to show Ḥamzah, who was given the title "The Master of Martyrs", in a very wicked light. If we compare this to the facts of history where the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) prayed over his martyred body 70 times, then this image of him as a wine drinking, unruly, criminal individual does not add up. It is clear that a tradition such as this, is simply slander designed to show the Umayyids (who were involved in similar sins) in the same light as Ḥamzah. In this way, they wanted to bring down the family of the Prophet to the same level as the Umayyid family.

The Fourth Imam's Critical Letter to Zuhrī

In regards to Zuhrī's unworthy actions, Imam Sajjād ('a) wrote him a letter that was highly critical and, at the same time, an attempt to set him right. This letter is as follows:

"May God save you and us from the various seditions (which occur), and may he protect you (from the entanglement) of the fire of hell. You are situated in a position, that if a person was to recognize it, he would feel pity towards you. God has given you many blessings, and they hang heavy around you: He has given you a healthy body, a long life, and he has made you

---

[110] Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Cairo, Maktabah 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Ḥanafī, vol. 5, p. 83.
- Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, Ajūba Masā'īl Jārallah, Second Edition, Ṣāydā, Maṭba'at al-Irfān, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 70.
- Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ḥilyat al-Aw'līyā, Fifth Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 144.

the holder of the Quranic sciences, as well as jurisprudence and an awareness of his religious precepts and the way of his Prophet (ṣ). Therefore, his proof has been completed on you... God has made the thankfulness of such blessings as obligatory on you, and he has tested you through these things, when he has said: '...If you are grateful, I will add more (favors) unto you; But if you show ingratitude, truly my punishment is terrible indeed.'[111]

Soon, when you are standing in front of your Lord, and he asks you how you thanked him for his blessings and how you responded to your obligations, in the face of his proof against you, what will your situation be like? Do not assume that God will accept your excuse and pass over your faults. By no means! God in his Holy Book has taken a pledge from the scholars that they must explain the realities to the people. He has said: '...to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it...'[112]

Know that the smallest thing which you have concealed and the lightest thing which you have taken on your shoulders is that (through your support of the tyrants), you have converted their fear into tranquility, and because you gained nearness to them and accepted their invitation whenever they invited you, you made the path smooth for them to mislead the people. How I fear that, as the consequence for your actions, your place will be the same as the traitors, and that due to what you have received in exchange for your cooperation with the oppressors, you will be called to account.

When things were offered to you which were not yours to take, you took them, and you went near an individual who does not give the people their rights, and when he brought you near to himself, you did not do away with any falsehood, and you selected one as a friend who was an enemy of God. Is it not true that when he invited you and brought you near to himself, they made you an axis on which their cruelty and oppressive actions turn? Did they not make you a bridge, through which they

---

[111] Surah Ibrāhīm, Verse 7.

[112] Surah Āli 'Imrān, Verse 187.

engaged in their criminal actions...?

You invite the people towards their (the oppressors) deviation and you walk on their path. Through you, they have created doubt in the (hearts) of the scholars, and through you, they have attracted the hearts of the ignorant towards themselves. (You have done such a service to them with your religious popularity) that the most intimate ministers and the most powerful of their companions have not been able (to achieve anything like it). (Indeed you have) created connections between them (the tyrants) and the people

The things which they have given to you (in terms of money, property, and jewels) are of such low value (and indeed worthless) compared with what they have taken from you (in terms of justifying their offenses). They have given you such a small sum for building up this world, and instead they have ruined your hereafter. Look at what you are doing and be careful of yourself; know that no one else will watch out for you. Consider yourself as responsible and account for the things which you are doing.

Look and see how you have paid back all of the blessings which God has given to you in your old age as sustenance. How I fear that you are included in these divine words which say: 'After them succeeded an (evil) generation: They inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (as an excuse): "(Everything) will be forgiven us."'[113]

You are not in an eternal abode— you are in a world which has announced its temporary nature. (Ask yourself): how long will a person survive his companions and peers? Fortunate is he who is fearful of his sins in this world and woe upon the person who dies and his sins remain after him.

Be alert and heedful, so that through these means, the danger is shown to you. Take steps forward while you still have the opportunity. You are not facing an ignorant being, and the one who is keeping track of your deeds will never be found inattentive of your errors. Be prepared for the journey, for you

[113] Surah 'Arāf, Verse 169.

have a long ways ahead of you; remedy your sins, for your heart is severely ill.

Do not think that I wish to rebuke or revile you; I only wish for you to remedy your past mistakes and to regain your lost religion. In this, I brought to mind the word of God, when he says: 'And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers.' [114]

Keep in mind your companions and peers who have gone from this world, and who have left you (alone). Have you forgotten? Look and see whether they were as entangled (and contaminated) as you have become, and whether they fell as far as you have fallen. Have you really done anything (which they did not act upon)? Do you know anything which they did not know? No, it is not such. In the opportunity that you found, you gained in position and honor in the eyes of the masses, while your condition put them into troubles, for they followed your opinions and acted upon them. Whatever you consider as lawful, they consider as being lawful, and whatever you consider as unlawful, they (also) consider as being unlawful. But of course you do not have such authority and power (over what is lawful and unlawful). Yet, what has made you prevail over them is their covetousness over what you have, their loss of their scholars, the prevalence of ignorance over you and them, as well your thirst and their thirst for position.

Do you not see how deep you have entered into ignorance and arrogance, and how badly the people have been afflicted with difficulties and sedition? You have put them into adversity, and the people, through seeing your rank and status, have considered themselves as lowly and they have become enamored of your high position. The people's hearts have become anxious to attain the level of your knowledge and to reach your rank and high status. Through these means, due to the effects of your actions and conduct, they are drowning in a sea (of error) whose depth is undiscovered, and they are entangled in difficulties, whose distance is unknown. May God

[114] Surah Dhārīyāt, Verse 55.

save us and you, for he is the rescuer (of the helpless).

Therefore, leave aside all of your (official) positions and injustices, so that you can join the pure and righteous ones who came before you. The same ones who are now in their rotten burial shrouds, sleeping on their beds of dust, whose stomachs have been joined with their backs, and there is no veil and obstruction between them and their Lord. The world does not deceive them and they are not captivated by it. They set their hearts on the meeting with their Lord and then they were called by their Lord; it was not long before they joined the ones who had gone before them. Yet the world has captivated you and led you astray in this way, at this point of old age[115], and with this level of knowledge, and at the very precipice of death. Then what expectations should we have of the young, the ignorant, the easily swayed, and those engaged in wrong doing. 'To God we belong and to him we are returning'. Who should we take sanctuary with and from whom should we seek the cure for our ills? We complain to God of your calamity and what we witness from you, and we anticipate compensation from our Lord due to this calamity which has overtaken us because of you.

Look and think on how you have given thanks to God for his sustenance to you in your old age? Look and see how you have honored God, who has given you prestige amongst the people, under the auspices of his religion? And look and see how you protect the divine dress, which he has covered you with amongst the people? Look and see in regards to how close or how far you are to your Lord, while he has ordered that you should be close to him and submit yourself to his command; therefore see where you are in this matter.

What has happened to you, that you do not wake up from the sleep of negligence and you do not repent of your offences?

---

[115] In regards to the reported birth of Zuhrī in 58 Hijrī and the martyrdom of Imam Sajjād (a) in the year 94 or 95 Hijrī... if the Imam (a) wrote this letter towards the end of his life, then Zuhrī would have been approximately 36 years old and he would not have been an old man. There are a few possible explanations for this matter: one of them is that Zuhrī was born earlier than 58 Hijrī, and in recording his birth, there had been a mistake. This is supported by the fact that Ibn Khallakān recorded his date of birth as being in the year 51, and that of Dhahabī as being 50 Hijrī.

And you say: "I swear by God that I have never acted in the way of God, so that I could revive his religion or destroy a falsehood." Is this the thanks for the blessings of God, where he has made you the bearer of the religious sciences? How I fear that you are the example which God has spoken of in the Quran when he said: 'But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts; soon, then, they will face destruction.'[116] God has made you the bearer of Quranic knowledge and he has given you knowledge of the religion as a deposit, yet you ruined it. I thank God that he saved us from your mistaken ways. May peace be upon you...."[117]

A Study in Freedom

It should not be thought that the Umayyids, just as they plotted and prepared traps for the likes of Zuhrī, did not try to do the same with the Fourth Imam ('a). In fact, they made many such plots and prepared many such traps for Imam Sajjād ('a), but he would not pay any attention to their attempted bribes or their threats. Let us take a quick look at two examples of such events:

1- One year, during the time of his caliphate, 'Abd al-Malik decided to participate in the Ḥajj pilgrimage. As he was engaged in his circumambulation, Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) was, by chance, in front of him, busy performing his circumambulation. The Imam ('a) was completely immersed in his worship and he did not pay the caliph any attention. 'Abd al-Malik, who had not seen the Imam ('a) in person and did not recognize him, asked: "Who is this man who is circumambulating in front of me and does not pay me any attention?" They replied: "He is 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn."

'Abd al-Malik went and sat in a corner, and he said: "Bring

---

[116] Surah Maryam, Verse 59.

[117] Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, Tuḥf al-'Ūqūl An Āli Rasūl, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Second Edition, Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī (al-Tābia) Lijama'at al-Mudarisīn Biqum Musharrifah, 1404 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 277-274.

- Al-Mūsawī al-Muqarram, 'Abd Razzāq, al-Imām Zayn al-'Abidīn, Qum, Dār al-Shabastarī Lil Maṭbū'āt, p. 154-159.

him to me!" When they brought the Imam ('a), he said to the Imam ('a): "Oh 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, I am not your father's killer! Why do you not come and visit me?" Imam Sajjād ('a) replied: "The murderer of my father only killed him, while my father destroyed the man's hereafter. Therefore, if you want to be like my father's killer, then be so!"

'Abd al-Malik responded: "No, my intent was for you to come to us, so that you may benefit from our material blessings." When the Imam ('a) heard these words, he went and took a seat on the ground in front of the Caliph. As everyone was watching him, he spread out the lap of his clothes, and said: "Oh Lord, show the value and worth of your friends to him." Suddenly the Caliph and those who were around him saw the lap of the Imam ('a) covered with sparkling jewels. The jewels sparkled to such an extent that they dazzled the eyes. The Imam ('a) then said: "Oh Lord, take them, for we have no need of them."[118]

2- 'Abd al-Malik had received information that the sword of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) was in the possession of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a). This was a very valuable sword due to its symbolism. In essence, it was a manifestation of governmental authority and legitimacy for whoever possessed it. Since this sword was in the possession of Imam Sajjād ('a), it was a cause of worry for 'Abd al-Malik, and he feared that this would be a source of support for the Imam ('a). In order to resolve this issue, he sent a messenger to the Imam ('a) and requested that the sword be sent to him; on the bottom of the letter, he also wrote that if the Imam ('a) needed anything, or wished for something to be done, he was ready to comply.

The Imam ('a) replied to him in the negative, refusing his request for the sword. 'Abd al-Malik sent him a threatening letter, saying that if he did not send him the sword, he would

---

[118] Qutb al-Rāwandī, al-Kharayij wa al-Jarāyih, researched and edited by: Shaykh Asadallah Rabbānī, Qum, Muṣṭafāwi Publications, p. 232.
- Al-Amīn al-'Āmūlī, al-Sayyid Muḥsin, al-Sahīfat al-Khāmīsah, Damascus, Maṭba'at Fīḥā', 1282 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 492.

cut off the Imam's ('a) stipend from the public treasury. During this time period, all of the Muslims received a stipend from the public treasury, and the Imam ('a) also had such a portion. The Imam ('a) fired back at him, saying: "God has taken the responsibility of saving his servants from the things which are unpleasant for them, and of giving them their sustenance from whence they do not expect, and in the Quran he says: 'Indeed Allah does not like any ingrate traitor.'"[119] [120]

5- Spreading Religious Knowledge

Another aspect of the Imam's ('a) struggle against the corruption and tyranny of his time was through means of spreading religious knowledge and explaining the various aspects of ethics and morality. The Imam ('a) took many long strides in this field and later scholars, such as Shaykh Mufīd, have written the following about him: "The scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have narrated so many sciences from him that they are not easily counted. Moreover, many supplications, virtues of the Quran, sermons, and issues of the obligatory and the forbidden (the Ḥalāl and the Ḥarām) have been narrated by the Imam ('a). These things have been recorded by famous scholars, and if we wished to mention them all, it would be a lengthy affair..."[121]

An example of the educational and ethical teachings of the mam ('a) can be found in an anthology by the name of 'Risālat al-Ḥuqūq'. In this work, the Imam ('a) listed the various responsibilities and duties that human beings have, whether these duties are towards God or towards people, be it their relatives or other individuals. These are listed under 50 different sections, starting with some general points and then

---

[119] Al-Amīn 'Āmūlī, Sayyid Muḥsin, A'yān al-Shī'ah, Beirut, Dār al-Ta'āruf Lil Maṭbū'āt, 1403 Hijir Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 635.
- Ayatollah Khāminiī, Sayyid 'Alī, A Research Into the Life of Imam Sajjād (a), First Print, Tehran, Daftare Hezbe Jumhūriye Islāmī, Nashrīye Shomaraye 63, 1361 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 73.
- Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, vol. 46, p. 95.

[120] Surah Ḥajj, Verse 38.

[121] Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 260.

becoming more specific as they go on.[122]

The 'Treatise on Rights' has been narrated through scholars of tradition, and it has been recorded in various books of tradition as well. It has also been printed a multitude of times and several commentaries and translations have been written on it. It is a beautiful work which details the rights and relationships that we have with one another.

6- Assisting the Needy

Another part of the Imam's ('a) life involved the way he would help support the people of his society. This support was all-encompassing in nature and included the time when people needed sanctuary during various civil conflicts, such as the tragedy of Ḥurrah, or during other times when peace prevailed and the poor were in need of assistance. In all such cases, his help to the people continued until the end of his life. History has recorded many telling and prominent examples of the Imam's actions.

One example which has been recorded in the history texts is that the Imam ('a) had taken on the responsibility of paying the expenses of 100 poor families in Medina.[123] A group of the people of Medina lived off of food which reached them during the night, and this was their source of sustenance. Yet they had no idea who the person was that would deliver this food to them each night. After the passing of Imam 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a), they realized that the individual had been none other than the Imam ('a) himself.[124]

---

[122] This treatise has been narrated by the late Ṣadūq in his book Al-Khiṣāl (Abwāb al-Khamsīn wa Māfūqah) through a chain of narrators and in the book Man Lā Yahḍarahu al-Faqīh (vol. 2, p. 618) through a mursal narration. Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Shu'bah, in his book Tuḥaf al-'Ūqūl has narrated this without a chain of narrators and in a more extensive fashion.

[123] Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ḥilyat al-Aw'līyā, Fifth Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 136.
- Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 327.

[124] 'Alī ibn 'Īsā 'Irbilī, Kashf al-Ghammah Fī Marifat al-'A'immah, Tabrīz, Maktabah Banī Hāshimī, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 289.
- Shablanjī, Nūr al-Absār Fī Manāqib Āali Baytin Nabī al-Mukhtār, Cairo, Maktabah al-Mashhad al-Ḥusaynī, p. 140.

The Imam ('a) would take a leather bag full of bread and other food items and personally carry them on his back. He would take the food to the houses of the poor and distribute them in a way where the people could not recognize him, saying: "Charity given in secret quenches the fire of God's wrath."[125] The people of Medina would later mention that: "We lost our source of (secret) charity at the time when 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a) passed away."[126]

During the years of his life, Imam Sajjād ('a) personally carried so many sacks filled with flour and other food items to the houses of the poor that his shoulder became bruised and callused. After his martyrdom, during his ceremonial washing, this bruise was seen by those who were present. When they asked what this bruise was from, it was mentioned: "This is the result of him carrying the heavy sacks of food to the houses of the poor."[127]

7- The Imam as the Centerpoint of Education

At the time of Islam's revelation, slavery was a common practice throughout the world and it was found in all of the major civilizations. Since it was not possible for it to be abolished all at once, Islam opened various other routes towards its gradual abolishment. From one angle, Islam reduced the ways that people could be taken as slaves and from another angle, it made the freeing of slaves an Islamic nstitution which was considered to be an act of worship. For xample, slaves were freed as expiation for various sins, as well as for abandoning certain obligatory religious duties. Through

- Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ḥilyat al-Aw'līyā, Fifth Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1407 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 140.

[125] 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, Ibid, p. 289.
- Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ibid, p. 136.
- Majlisī, Ibid, p. 88.

[126] Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ibid, p. 136.
- Shablanjī, Ibid, p. 140.
- Majlisī, Ibid, p. 88.

[127] Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, Ibid, p. 136.
- 'Alī ibn 'Īsā, Ibid, p. 289.
- Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Ibid, vol. 4, p. 154.

these steps, Islam reduced the means for the taking of new slaves, and opened wide the door for their release.

From a third angle, the Prophet (ṣ) recommended to the Muslims that they should treat the slaves which they already possessed with compassion, much like they would treat their own families. They were ordered to give the slaves the same food which they themselves ate and the same clothes which they themselves would wear. Even beyond such practices, the release of slaves was given a very high value and it was equated with religious virtue. In many traditions, it has been mentioned that freeing the slaves is one of the loftiest acts of worship that one can perform and it entails a great deal of divine reward. In this way, Muslims were highly encouraged to help release those who were in a state of slavery.[128]

When one researches the life of Imam Sajjād ('a), narrations recounting occasions when slaves are freed are very common. In fact, the Imam ('a) performed this action so many times that he must have had another reason other than just divine reward. When we examine this matter in some detail, we see that the Imam ('a) had goals which included the training and education of these slaves. History shows that he would buy them, and then he would spend a period of time training and educating them. When they had been sufficiently trained and educated to be independent, he would free them and they would go into the society as models of exemplary human beings. They would in turn begin the process of teaching and educating others in the society. It is interesting to note that even after their release, these former slaves would maintain their connection with the Imam ('a), remaining very close to him.

'Alī ibn Ṭāwūs, in the month of Ramaḍān, wrote: "'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ('a) would release 20 slaves on the last night of the month of Ramaḍān, and he would say: 'Every night in the month of Ramaḍān when the fast has been completed, God releases 70,000 of the people of hell from the torment of its flames; during the last night of the month, he releases a number

[128] Refer to: Irajī, Muḥammad Ṣādiq, Slavery in Islam, Tehran University.

equal to all the other nights of Ramaḍān combined. I would like that my Lord sees that I have released my slaves in this world, so that he will free me from the fire of hell on the Day of Judgment.'"

Imam Sajjād ('a) would never keep a slave for longer than one year. Whenever he would bring a slave at the beginning or middle of the year, he would free them on the night of 'Īd al-Fitr. During the next year, he would bring another individual in place of them and they would in turn be freed in the month of Ramaḍān; this continued until the very end of his life.

It has been narrated that the Imam ('a) would also bring some his slaves to the Ḥajj pilgrimage. During the Ḥajj rites, as he was departing towards Mash'ar, he would free them all and give them money.[129] According to one of the writers: "Whenever the slaves would become aware of this practice, they would find a way to free themselves from their slavery under the nobles and aristocrats and go into the service of Imam Zayn al-'Abidīn ('a)." Throughout the years, Imam Sajjād ('a) continued to free slaves in this way. On every occasion possible, he would repeat this action until there was a large group of slaves in the city of Medina who had been personally freed by him.[130]

It is evident that the Imam ('a) had in reality created an nstitution for training and educating others. He would buy slaves, keep them under his supervision for a period of time, and then train and educate them. When the time arrived for freeing them, each one of them was an example for other people in the society. After they were freed, they would not cut off their spiritual connection with the Imam ('a), and they would in turn spend their time training and educating others in the society. This program of the Imam ('a) is a truly fascinating one, and one worthy of further research and reflection.[131]

---

[129] Iqbāl al-'A'māl, Second Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 261.

[130] Sayyid al-'Ahl, 'Abd al-Aziz, The Life of Zayn al-'Abidīn (a), translated by Ḥusayn Wujdānī, Third Print, Tehran, New Month Magazine Publications, p. 55.

[131] In preparing this section, the following book was used: The Fourth Imam (a) as the Guardian of the Revolution of Karbalā, written by 'Alī Akbar Ḥasanī.

The Fifth Imam

Imam Muḥammad Bāqir

A Brief Look into the Life of Imam Bāqir

Imam Bāqir (ʿa) was born in the year 57 Hijrī in the city of Medina. He was 39 years old at the time of the death of his father, Imam Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa), who passed away in 94 Hijrī. His name is Muḥammad, while his kunya is Abū Jaʿfar, and his agnomens are Bāqir and Bāqir al-ʿŪlūm.

His mother is Umm ʿAbdullah, the daughter of Imam Ḥasan (ʿa). He was the first person who was a Fāṭimī and an ʿAlawī from both his mother and father's side. Imam Bāqir (ʿa) passed away in the year 114 Hijrī in the city of Medina, and was buried in the famous graveyard of Baqīʿ. He was buried next to the grave of his father and grandfather. The period of his imamate was eighteen years in length.

Caliphs Contemporary to Imam Bāqir

The Imam (ʿa) lived contemporaneously with the following caliphs:

1- Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (86-96 Hijrī)
2- Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (96-99 Hijrī)
3- ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (99-101 Hijrī)
4- Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (101-105 Hijrī)
5- Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (105-125 Hijrī)

These caliphs, with the exception of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who was relatively just and inclined towards the family of the Prophet, were all tyrannical, despotic, and self serving. They were no less tyrannical and oppressive than their forbearers, and they were especially severe on Imam Bāqir (ʿa).

The Founder of a Great Movement of Learning

Although he lived in unfavorable and restrictive times, Imam Bāqir ('a) engaged in disseminating the reality of Islam. He is famously known for analyzing and explaining various intellectual issues. He brought about an extensive movement in learning and science, and laid the foundations for an Islamic university, which reached its zenith in the time of his son, Imam Ṣādiq ('a).

Imam Bāqir ('a) was superior in his knowledge, ascetism, eminence, and virtue, over all of the Hāshimīs. The eminent status of his knowledge and actions was verified by friend and foe alike. Many traditions have remained from him in the fields of Islamic rulings, Quranic commentary, the history of Islam, and various other subjects...[132]

The distinguished scholars of that day, along with a number of the companions of the Prophet (ṣ), benefitted greatly from the presence of Imam Bāqir ('a). Jābir ibn Yazīd Ja'farī, Kaysān Sajistānī (from the Tābi'īn) and jurisprudents such as: Ibn Mubārak, Zuhrī, Awzā'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Shāfi'ī, and Ziyād ibn Mūndhar Nahdī all benefited from his knowledge and narrated his words both through intermediaries and without intermediaries.

The compilations of scholars and historians of the Ahl al-Sunnah, such as Ṭabarī, Balādhūrī, Salāmī, Khatīb Baghdādī, Abū Na'īm Iṣfihānī, and books such as Muwaṭṭa' Mālik, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Masnad Abī Ḥanīfah, Masnad Marwazī, Tafsīr Naqqāshī, Tafsīr Zamakhsharī, as well as tens of others like them (which include some of the most important books of the Ahl al-Sunnah), all contain the narrations of the Fifth Imam ('a). All throughout these works, the words 'Qāla Muḥammad ibn 'Alī'[133] or 'Qāla Muḥammad al-Bāqir' can be seen.[134] The books of the Shia are also, naturally, full of the words and

---

[132] Shaykh Mufīd, Al-'Irshād, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 261.

[133] This means: Muḥammad ibn 'Alī has said....

[134] Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Manāqib Āali Abī Ṭālib, Qum, Mu'assasah' Intishārāt 'Allāmah, vol. 4, p. 195.

traditions of Imam Bāqir (ʿa), and these pertain to many subjects and fields.

Imam Bāqir according to the Scholars

The reputation of the knowledge and breadth of learning of Imam Bāqir (ʿa) rapidly spread to all corners of the Muslim nation. He was so well known for his knowledge that he was given the title 'Bāqir al-ʿŪlūm', which means: 'The opener of the doors of knowledge, and the solver of the problems of the sciences.' Ibn Ḥajar Haytamī has written: "Muḥammad Bāqir opened many hidden treasures of science, learning, and religious law, as well as various wisdoms and subtleties. These are all quite apparent, except for someone who is lacking in intelligence or is of bad character. It is for these traits that he was called the splitter of knowledge, the compository of learning, and the flag bearer of science."[135]

'Abdullah ibn 'Aṭā', who was one of the prominent personalities and scholars during the time of the Imam (ʿa), has said: "I never saw the scholars of Islam as being so lowly and humbled in terms of their learning, as when they were in the gatherings of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (ʿa). I saw Ḥakam ibn ʿUtaybah, who was known in all corners of the nation for his knowledge and jurisprudence, sitting like a child in front of his high ranking teacher before Muḥammad Bāqir (ʿa). He was sitting in a position of humility, captivated and absorbed by the words and character of the Imam (ʿa)."[136]

In his speeches, Imam Bāqir (ʿa) would frequently reference the verses of the Holy Quran, and he would bring evidence from the Book of God. He would say: "Whatever I say, ask me where the related verse is found in the Quran, so that I may present it to you."[137]

---

[135] Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Maḥraqah, Second Edition, Cairo, Maktabah Cairo, p. 201.

[136] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭbaʿah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 337.
- ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā 'Irbilī, Kashf al-Ghammah Fī Marifat al-'A'immah, Tabriz, Maktabah Banī Hāshimī, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 329.

[137] Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, al-Maṭbaʿat Murtaḍawīyah, 1350 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 176.

The Students of Imam Bāqir's School

Imam Bāqir ('a) educated many prominent students in the fields of fiqh, tradition, commentary, and various other Islamic sciences; each of these students was counted as a heavyweight in respect to their learning and knowledge. Prominent personalities such as Muḥammad ibn Mūslim, Zurārah ibn Ayn, Abū Basir, Burayd ibn Mū'āwīya 'Ajalī, Jābir ibn Yazīd, Ḥamrān ibn Ayn, and Hishām ibn Sa'alīm were all trained in the school of Imam Bāqir ('a).

The sixth Imam ('a) has mentioned: "Our school and the traditions of my father were kept alive by four individuals. These four are: Zurārah, Abū Baṣīr, Muḥammad ibn Mūslim, and Burayd ibn Mū'āwīya 'Ajalī. If it were not for these four, no one would have benefitted from the teachings of the religion and the school of thought of the Prophet. These individuals were the preservers of the religion. From amongst the Shias of our time, these were the first who became acquainted with our teachings, and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be joined with us sooner than others."[138] The students of Imam Bāqir's ('a) school were the heads of jurisprudence and tradition during their time, and they were considered superior to their non-Shia counterparts.

The Splitter of Knowledge and the Opener of the Doors of Learning

The scientific works of the Imam ('a), and the students which his school delivered to the Muslim nation, gave fulfilment to the prediction of the Prophet (ṣ). This foretelling is found in a tradition narrated from Jābir ibn 'Abdullah Anṣārī, the famous personality from the early days of Islam's revelation. Jābir was one of the great companions of the Prophet (ṣ) and he possessed a special affection for the family of the Prophet. He has mentioned that: "One day the Prophet

[138] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl (famously known as Rijāl Kashī), researched and edited by Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, p. 136 and 137 (Tradition 219).

(ṣ) said to me: 'After me, you will see an individual who is from my family, whose name is (the same as) my name, and whose appearance will be similar to mine. He will open the doors of knowledge to the people.'

The Prophet (ṣ) foretold of this event at a time when Imam Bāqir ('a) had not yet been born; years passed from this foretelling, and the era of the Fourth Imam ('a) arrived. One day during this time period, Jābir was passing through the streets of Medina when his eye fell on Imam Bāqir ('a). When he paid careful attention, he noticed all of the exact signs which the Prophet (ṣ) had mentioned to him. He asked: "What is your name?" The Imam ('a) replied: "My name is Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ('a)." Jābir began to kiss his forehead and said: "Your grandfather, the Prophet (ṣ), sent you his greetings through me."

From that day on, in respect of the Prophet (ṣ) and as a sign of the greatness of Imam Bāqir ('a), he would visit the Imam ('a) twice each day. In addition to this, when he was in the mosque of the Prophet (ṣ), he would sit amongst the crowds and narrate the prediction of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) in response to those who would criticize the Imam (a) with ill intentions.

An Important Point

It is important to mention that this event, where Jābir sees Imam Bāqir ('a) and conveys the Prophet's (ṣ) greeting to him, has been narrated through many traditions and quoted in a number of books. These books include: Rījāl Kashshī, Kashf al-Ghammah, Āmālī Ṣadūq, Āmālī Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtiṣāṣ Mufīd, and as well as other texts.

When we begin to examine these traditions though, it does seem that they are contradictory in two ways: firstly, according to the context of some of these traditions, Jābir saw Imam Bāqir ('a) in the streets of Medina while other traditions recount that he saw him in the house of the Fourth Imam ('a). Another group of traditions narrate that Imam Bāqir ('a) went to see

Jābir, and Jābir then recognized him. Secondly, in certain traditions, it has been explained that Jābir had become blind at that time, while in other traditions it is mentioned that Jābir looked at the appearance of Imam Bāqir ('a) in detail. Clearly, if Jābir was blind, he couldn't have possibly seen the Imam ('a).

In answering the first potential contradiction, there is no real issue between the various traditions because the context of the traditions show that Jābir had a great deal of affection towards the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and he would repeat the foretelling and the greeting of the Prophet (ṣ) many times. His intention was to show the greatness of Imam Bāqir ('a) to the people. Therefore, it isn't an issue if the tradition is repeated multiple times in different places.

In regards to the second potential contradiction, the traditions which narrate that Jābir looked at the Imam ('a) can be from before the time of his blindness. Shaykh Mufīd has narrated from Imam Bāqir ('a): "I went to see Jābir ibn 'Abdullah Anṣārī and I gave him my greetings. He answered my greetings and asked: 'Who are you?' And this was after he had become blind..."[139] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī has narrated a similar tradition.[140]

The Political and Social Conditions during the Life of the Imam

Let us now take a look at the particularities of each of the five caliphs who ruled during the time of Imam Bāqir ('a). This will give us a deeper understanding of the social and political conditions which Imam Bāqir ('a) lived during his lifetime.

Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik

Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik was the first contemporary caliph during the time of Imam Bāqir ('a). Since we already described

---

[139] Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 262.

[140] Sibṭ ibn Jawzī, Tadhkirah al-Khawāṣ, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 337.

this caliph's characteristics in the chapter on Imam Sajjād ('a), we will simply add a few new points in this section.

The period of the caliphate of Walīd was a period of victory and conquest of the Muslims over their enemies. During this time, the territory of the Ummayid government increased from both the east and the west. Since his caliphate occurred in a period where calm prevailed in the Muslim nation, Walīd was able to take up where the previous caliphs had left off, and make considerable gains in terms of battle and conquest. The lands under Walīd's dominion expanded considerably and he was able to conquer parts of India, as well as Kabul, Kashgar, Tūs, and various other territories. He even pushed into Andalusia, and the army of the Andulusians were defeated by the Muslims under the command of Mūsā ibn Nusayr. As a result of this, Andulusia also became part of the Muslim territories as well.[141]

Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik

The period of the caliphate of Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik was short in duration; it lasted approximately 3 years.[142] During the early period of his caliphate, Sulaymān showed much flexibility. For example, he opened the gates of the prisons of Iraq, which had been filled with innocent people by Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, and allowed the prisoners to go free. He also removed the tax agents of Ḥajjāj and nullified many of the oppressive measures which had been in place.

The Fire of Vengeance

Sulaymān's initiative in freeing innocent prisoners in Iraq was one of his early actions as a ruler. Unfortunately, his methods would change later on and he completely reversed course. He began engaging in acts of personal vengeance, and

---

[141] Dr. Āyatī, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, Andulusia: The History of the Muslim Government in Europe, Tehran, Tehran University Publications, 1363 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 17-18.

[142] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dāru Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 11 and 37.

- Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 173 and 182.

his oppression reached epic proportions. He also began to support certain tribes over others. For example, he put the tribe of Muḍarā under pressure and supported their tribal rivals, the Qaḥṭānīs.[143] He also killed some of the heads of the army, as well as some of the notable personalities of the time. Mūsā ibn Nusayr and Ṭāriq ibn Zīyād were two champions of the victory over Andulusia. In spite of this, they fell in the caliph's disfavor and they were exiled as a result.[144]

The compiler of the text 'The History of Political Islam' has written: "Sulaymān would treat his governors in different ways. He would favor some of them, while plotting to eliminate others. Sulaymān had enmity towards individuals such as: Muḥammad ibn Qāsim, the governor of India, Qutaybīyah ibn Mūslim, the governor of Transoxiana, and Mūsā ibn Nusayr, the governor of Andulusia."[145] All of Sulaymān's animosity and enmity were based on his personal whims and impulses.

Corruption in the Government

Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik was a man who was particularly avaricious, gluttonous, and pleasure seeking. He had an inordinate love of opulence and luxury. He would eat an amount of food sufficient for several normal people and his journeys were always colorful and displayed pretentious airs. He would wear very flashy, expensive clothing and he had special designs painstakingly embroidered into them.

He would engage in so much excess that he would not even allow his servants and butlers to approach him in ordinary clothing; they were forced to wear embroidered and colorful clothing as well. This love of extravagance and splendor soon went beyond the palace gates; it began to permeate throughout the cities of the Muslim nation, and the wearing of extravagant

---

[143] Furūkh, 'Umar, Tārīkh al-Ṣadr al-Islam wa al-Dawlat al-Umawīya, Third Edition, Beirut, Dār al-'Ilm Lil Mulāyīn, 1976 A.D., p. 197.

[144] Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī, Mukhtasar Tārīkh al-'Arab, edited by 'Afīf al-Ba'albakī, Second Edition, Beirut, Dār al-'Ilm Lil Mulāyīn, 1967 A.D., p. 125.

[145] Doctor Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, The Political History of Islam, Fourth Print, Tehran, Everlasting (Javīdān) Publications, 1360 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 1, p. 401.

clothing was soon normalized amongst the common people of Yemen, Kūfah, and Alexandria.[146]

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz

Although the will of ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (the father of Sulaymān) stated that the successor to Sulaymān would be his brother Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, this was later changed. When Sulaymān became ill and knew that he would soon die, he chose ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz as his successor instead.

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was immediately faced with the troubled situation of the masses, and was witness to the rage and enmity which the people expressed towards the Umayyid government. From the beginning of his caliphate, he acted with an attitude of appeasement towards the oppressed masses; in his directives to his governors and representatives throughout the Muslim nation, he wrote the following: "The people are afflicted with difficulties and various burdens. They are victims of oppression and the religion has been implemented amongs them in a haphazard manner. Past oppressive governors anc representatives, through their policies, have not concentrated on protecting the people's rights, nor on acting with moderation and goodness towards them— they have taken the people to the very edge. Therefore, the past must be compensated for, and these types of actions must be stopped.

Henceforth, whenever someone wishes to go on the Ḥajj pilgrimage, you must give them their stipend from the public treasury sooner so that they can leave on their journey. Until you have consulted with me, none of you has the right to punish anyone, or cut off their hand, or to hang them from the gallows."[147]

The Struggle against Corruption

In addition to this, after strengthening and stabilizing his

---

[146] Masʿūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab wa Maʿādin al-Jawhar, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 175.

[147] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Yaʿqūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 50.

government, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz put all of the horses and other quadrupeds of the caliphate for immediate auction, and then deposited the money from their sale into the public treasury. He then ordered his wife Fāṭimah (the daughter of 'Abd al-Malik) to return all of her jewelry, wealth, and expensive gifts, which her father and brother had gifted to her with money from the public treasury. Fāṭimah was warned that if she was not able to part with her ill gotten property, she would have to leave his house. Fāṭimah accepted and returned all of the jewelry and ornaments back to the public treasury.[148] 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz not only accustomed his wife with the rules of justice and fairness, but he also sold all of the possessions, real estate, and expensive clothing which had belonged to Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik. This money, too, was then deposited into the public treasury and it ended up amounting to 24,000 dinars.[149]

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz began his social reforms and struggle against corruption from his own home and he expanded it to include the entire system of government which he had inherited. He then expanded his circle of reform to include the Umayyid clan which included his own cousins. He ordered them to return whichever portions of their wealth had been appropriated from the public treasury. With complete decisiveness, he took back the wealth that the Umayyids had forcefully appropriated from the people, and gave it back to their rightful owners. To a very large extent, he prevented the Umayyids from behaving as if the people's wealth completely belonged to them.[150]

This situation cost the Umayyids dearly, and they began to

---

[148] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, (Published by Maktabah al-Muthannā – Baghdad), 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 232.

- Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāmah Wa al-Sīyāsah, Third Edition, Cairo, Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 116.

[149] Ibn Qutayba, al-Imāmah Wa al-Sīyāsah, Third Edition, Cairo, Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 116.

[150] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, (Published by Maktabah al-Muthannā–Baghdad), 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 232.

plot against 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. When a group that was close to him visited, they said to him: "Are you not afraid that your clan will revolt against you and take your rulership?" 'Umar responded by saying: "I fear nothing but the accounting of the Day of Judgment."[151]

The Prohibition of Cursing Imam 'Alī

It is clear that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz was a relatively just and benevolent ruler compared to the caliphs which had come before him. Although his rule is considered as religously illegitimate, since this position belonged to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), he still fought against much of the corruption and oppression which had been established by past caliphs, and his government aimed to serve the needs of the people. Amongst these services, his most important and shining service was the prohibition of the cursing and slandering of Imam 'Alī ('a). Through this prohibition, he put a halt to a disgraceful religious deviation which had been going on for 69 years; this was a great service not only to the Shias, but to all of humanity.

The religious deviation of cursing Imam 'Alī ('a) was firs established during the time of Mū'āwīya's caliphate. After th martyrdom of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) in the year 40 Hijr Mū'āwīya gained complete political control and decided to transform the name of Imam 'Alī ('a) into that of the most hated man in the Islamic nation. He aimed to do this through the use of a continuous propaganda campaign.

In order to enact this policy, he first put the supporters and followers of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) under tremendous pressure, and through the use of death threats, he prevented many of the virtues of the Imam ('a) from being recounted. He did not allow the narration of even one tradition, or one word of wisdom, or even one poem in praise of Imam 'Alī ('a) to be recited in public. Furthermore, in order to portray Imam 'Alī ('a) in a negative light, he ordered his narrators of tradition and

---

[151] Abū Ḥanīfah Daynāwarī, al-Akhbār al-Tawl, researched by: 'Abd Mun'im 'Āmir, Cairo, Dār Aḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīya (Published by Intishārāt Āftāb Tehran), p. 331.

his paid agents to fabricate various sayings against Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). In this way, numerous traditions were fabricated and became considered as common knowledge amongst the people.

Mūʿāwīya did not suffice with these actions— he also ordered that Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) be cursed and slandered from the pulpits at every Friday Prayer. This cursing was to be added to the traditional Friday sermon; in effect, it became a part of the religious tradition of the Muslims. This disgraceful deviation was put into effect and became a standard practice in the various territories of the Muslim world. It affected the masses and took root in the public consciousness so much so that children were born with the hatred of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), and they would grow old and die with this hatred in their hearts.

After Mūʿāwīya died, the succeeding Umayyid caliphs continued with this religious deviation, and it was still being practiced until the end of the first century Hijrī, when ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz reached the position of the caliphate.[152]

The Effect of One Teacher

Some people wonder why ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was so ifferent from the rest of the Umayyid caliphs. The answer to his question lies in two seemingly minor events which took place during his youth. The first event took place with his teacher ʿUbaydullah, who was a godly and pious man, and who had been placed in charge of educating ʿUmar. One day, ʿUmar was busy playing with other children from the Umayyid clan and their relatives. While the children were playing they would use any excuse to curse Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and they found this to be funny. This had become so normal in the society that even small children would would do it as they were playing. ʿUmar, too, copied this behavior that he saw in his young friends.

On that day, at that exact time, ʿUmar's teacher happened to pass by this group of children and he heard his young student cursing Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). The teacher didn't say anything

---

[152] Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Ayatollah ʿUẓmā al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, vol. 3, p. 57.

and he went to the mosque. The time for classes arrived, and so 'Umar also went to the mosque in order to attend. When his teacher saw him, he began to pray. 'Umar sat down and waited for his teacher to finish praying, but his teacher continued praying for an unusually long time. 'Umar sensed that his teacher was upset at him and the prayer was simply an excuse to avoid him.

Eventually, the teacher finished his prayer, and he turned towards 'Umar with anger and said: "How did you come to think that after God was pleased with the 'People of Badr' and the 'Pledge of Riḍwān', he then became angry at them, and they are worthy of being cursed?"[153] 'Umar responded: "I don't know anything about this." His teacher then said: "Then why do you curse 'Alī ('a)?" 'Umar replied: "I apologize for my actions, and repent for what I have done— I promise that I won't repeat this action any more."

The logical and effective words of the teacher had a profound effect and they influenced the young 'Umar greatly. The son of 'Abd al-'Azīz decided from that day onwards not to bring up the name of 'Alī ('a) in any negative context. In spite of his personal beliefs, 'Umar would still hear the slander and cursing of 'Alī ('a) in the streets, marketplaces, and even when playing with his friends. This continued until the second event took place, which sealed his determination in this matter.

A Momentous Acknowledgement

The father of 'Umar had been selected as the governor of Medina on behalf of the Syrian government. At the weekly Friday Prayers, as was the usual custom, he would conclude his sermon by cursing Imam 'Alī ('a). One day, his son 'Umar asked him: "Oh father, when you are delivering your sermon, you express yourself with great eloquence and clear language, but when you begin to curse 'Alī, your tongue has a stammer to it. What is the reason behind this?"

His father replied: "Oh my son, you have become aware of

[153] Imam 'Alī (a) was a participant in the Battle of Badr and the Pledge of Riḍwān.

this?" 'Umar responded: "Yes father." His father replied: "My son, if these very same people who gather around our pulpit knew the virtues of 'Alī that I know, they would disperse from around us and follow his children!" 'Umar, who still remembered the words of his teacher, and who had now heard these words from his own father, was severely shaken. He pledged that if he ever reached power, he would put a stop to this religious deviation.

Later, when 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz reached the caliphate in the year 99 Hijrī, he acted on his personal pledge and sent a directive, ordering that the following verse be recited instead of the cursing of 'Alī ('a): "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."[154] This initiative was met with the people's approval, and the poets and narrators who had cursed Imam 'Alī ('a) were from that point on criticized by the people for what they had done.[155]

The Return of Fadak to the Descendants of Fāṭimah

Another directive of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz consisted of giving back the land of Fadak to the descendents of Fāṭimah ('a). This was an estate which had been unjustly taken from her long ago. The story of Fadak is truly a heartbreaking event in the pages of history. However, it is not within the scope of this book to discuss its details so let us just briefly review what happened:

Fadak is the name of a property which the Holy Prophet (ṣ) gave to his daughter Fāṭimah ('a) during his lifetime. After the passing of the Prophet (ṣ), Abū Bakr took this land by force from her and declared it as part of the government's assets. From that time onwards, this land was passed from one caliph

---

[154] Surah Nahl, Verse 90.

[155] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 42. Also refer to: Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 184; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Commentary on the Nahj al-Balāghah, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Ayatollah 'Uẓmā al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, vol. 3, p. 59.

to another, until Mū'āwīya gifted it to Marwān. Marwān in turn gifted it to his son 'Abd al-'Azīz, and after the death of 'Abd al-'Azīz, Fadak was passed down to his son 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz then returned this property to the descendants of the Lady Fāṭimah ('a), and said: "Fadak is theirs and the Umayyids have no right over it." Unfortunately, after the passing of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, when Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik became caliph, this land was once again seized by the Umayyids.[156]

Ṣadūq, in his book Al-Khiṣāl, has narrated that when 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz went to Medina and met with Imam Bāqir ('a), he returned Fadak to him.[157] It was in regards to these types of services, where 'Umar would repeal various oppressive measures that had been placed on the family of the Prophet (ṣ), that Imam Bāqir ('a) said: "'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz is a decent individual from the clan of the Umayyids..."[158] The rule of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz only lasted for two years and it is mentioned that the Umayyids poisoned and killed him because of his policies.[159]

The Prohibition of Recording Traditions

One of the deviations which was implemented in the Muslim nation after the passing of the Prophet (ṣ) was the prohibition of writing down and recording traditions. This prohibition extended to collective traditions in book form as well. This policy resulted in great harm to the Muslims, and its effect was felt both immediately, as well as long term.

The traditions and words of the Prophet (ṣ) have always been considered as the most important source of guidance after the Holy Quran. They are the second greatest source of Islamic

---

[156] Ibn Wāḍih, Tārīkh Ya'qūbī, researched by: Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm, Najaf, Maktabah Haidarīah, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 50.

[157] Al-Khiṣāl, Bāb al-Thalātha.

[158] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by: Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Madanī, (Published by Maktabah al-Muthannā – Baghdad), 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 230.

[159] Ibn 'Abdrabih, Uqd al-Farīd, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1403 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 439.

culture, and are in essence, inseparable from the text of the Quran. These traditions complement the Quran and vice versa. In spite of these realities, the first and second caliphs rose up in opposition to the narration and compilation of traditions, and through the use of certain frivolous pretexts, they prohibited the narration, recording, and compilation of these valuable gems.

Abū Bakr said: "Do not narrate anything from the Prophet of God (ṣ), and if anyone among you asks about a matter, then say that the Book of God (the Quran) is among us; consider what it has proclaimed lawful as being lawful, and what it has proclaimed unlawful as being unlawful."[160] In order to prevent the writing of the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ), the Second Caliph wrote a directive to all of the various areas in the Muslim lands, declaring: "Whoever has written a tradition from the Prophet (ṣ) must destroy it." The Second Caliph did not find this directive sufficient enough and he would repeatedly remind the companions of the Prophet (ṣ) and the memorizers of tradition to abstain from the narration and recording of their knowledge.

Qarẓat ibn Ka'b, one of the famous companions of the Prophet (ṣ), has said: "When 'Umar was seeing us off towards Iraq, he accompanied us a part of the way, and said: 'Do you know why I am seeing you off?' We replied: 'We suppose that the caliph, out of respect for us companions of the Prophet (ṣ), is favoring us with this.' 'Umar said: 'Even beyond this issue of respect, I am escorting you so that I can advise you on a matter.' Then he added: 'You are going to an area where the people have filled their mosques and their gatherings with the recitation of the Quran. My advice is that you leave them in this state, and do not busy them with traditions— do not prevent them from the recitation of the Quran with the narration of traditions. Present the Quran without any excess words or traditions, and narrate less traditions from the Prophet (ṣ). In this policy, I am going to work alongside you.' When Qarẓat entered the area

[160] Shams al-Dīn Dhahabī, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, Beirut, Dār al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 3.

that he was commissioned to serve, the people asked him: 'Narrate a tradition for us.' He answered: 'The caliph has prohibited us from the narration of traditions.'"[161]

One time during the period of his caliphate, it is narrated that 'Umar changed his mind and decided to write down the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ). He went ahead and consulted the people to see what they thought about the matter. After contemplating the issue for a whole month, he found a solution. He announced to the people: "I remembered the nations of the past who lagged behind in relation to their heavenly texts because they wrote down their traditions and paid too much attention to them. Therefore, I will never allow the 'Book of God' (Quran) to be mixed with anything else."[162]

The Second Caliph would severely punish anyone he found narrating or writing down traditions. One day, 'Umar said to Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Dardā', and Abū Dhar (who were all from the famous personalities of Islam): "What are these traditions which you are narrating from the Prophet (ṣ)?" He then had them imprisoned, and they remained there until the death of 'Umar.[163] This overall atmosphere, combined with variou punishments and penalties, restrained the majority of th Muslims from narrating and writing down traditions. The people were prevented from writing down the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) for almost one hundred years.

---

[161] Shamsh al-Dīn Dhahabī, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, Beirut, Dār al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 7.
- 'Ajāj al-Khaṭīb, Muḥammad, al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadwīn, Cairo, Dār al-Fikr, 1391 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 97.
- Ibn Mājah, Sunan, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 12.
- Al-Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, Al-Mustadrak 'Alā al-Ṣaḥiḥain, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'rifah, vol. 1, p. 102.

[162] Muḥammad ibn Sa'ad, al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 3, p. 287.
- 'Askarī, Sayyid Murtaḍā, A Look At The Fate of Traditions, Tehran, Rūzbeh Publications, 1353 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 23.
- Suyūṭī, Tadrib al-Rāwī Fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 64.

[163] Al-Ḥākim Nayshābūrī, Al-Mustadrak 'Alā al-Ṣaḥiḥain, Beirut, Dār al-Ma'rifah, vol. 1, p. 110. In Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ (vol. 1, p. 7) Abū Mas'ūd Ansārī has been named in place of Abū Dhar.

An Irreparable Harm

These measures prevented the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) from being narrated, and they were confined to the hearts of those who had memorized them. For this reason, the Muslims did not have access to much prophetic knowledge for a long period of time. This approached such extremes that Shaʿbī has narrated: "I was a close associate of Ibn ʿUmar for one year, and I did not hear him narrate even one tradition from the Prophet (ṣ)."[164] Sā'ib ibn Yazīd[165] has also reported: "I traveled with Saʿad ibn Mālik from Medina to Mecca. During the length of the journey, he did not narrate even one tradition from the Prophet (ṣ)."

This prohibition resulted in far reaching negative effects in the society. For example, ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, who had recorded traditions from the Prophet (ṣ) on his orders, hid his compilation due to the directive of the caliph. Today, no mention of his book of traditions is to be found— In essence, all of the traditions which he recorded were lost forever. The ill effects of this prohibition to Islam and the Muslims is quite obvious, and the harm is of such that it cannot be compensated for. Some of these books of tradition were abandoned for nearly one hundred years, and they were absent from the sphere of Muslim life for this entire period.

The worst of these ill effects came from a group of liars and paid agents, who used this opportunity to fabricate and falsify traditions. These traditions were oftentimes to the benefit of the groups in power. Naturally, when traditions are confined to the limits of individual memory, and there are no registry of traditions or any means of checking their authenticity, the door is opened to the fabrication and falsification of these holy narrations. In these circumstances, tens of Abū Hurayrahs came into existence, and for the right amount of money and wealth, they played the role of authentic narrators of tradition.

This situation continued towards the end of the first

---

[164] Ibn Mājah, Sunan, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 11.

[165] Ibn Mājah, Sunan, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 12.

century Hijrī until the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in the year 99 Hijrī. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz eliminated this religious deviation from among the people, and he began the process of reintroducing the custom of compiling and spreading narrations. In one of his directives, he encouraged the scholars and narrators who were active in this field by telling them: "Collect and compile the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ), for I fear that the scholars and narrators of tradition will pass away and the light of knowledge will be extinguished." According to Būkhārī, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz wrote a similar letter from Syria to Abī Bakr ibn Ḥazm, who was the governor of Medina on his behalf.[166]

Still, this was only the beginning and a long period of time was needed to rebuild what had been lost. What was now prevalent in the memories of the people was also naturally diluted and mixed with certain distortions and alterations. Some of these were purposeful, while others were the natural results of time and the fallible human memory.

Unfortunately, as the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was short in its duration, this policy did not progress with much speed; after ʿUmar, Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik succeeded the caliphate and they were not very concerned about these matters. In fact, truth be told, they were not too concerned about the progress of Islam and the Muslims at all, much less the collection and preservation of traditions. Some have written that: "The first individual who began gathering traditions by the order of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was Muḥammad ibn Mūslim ibn Shihāb Zuhrī."[167]

It should also be noted that while the narration and compilation of traditions was allowed during the time of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, many fabricated and falsified traditions ended up entering into these collections as well. In

---

[166] Būkhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, Bisharḥ al-Kīrmānī, Second Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 2, p. 6.

[167] Mudīr Shanichī, Kāẓim, ʿIlm al-Ḥadīth Wa Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, Third Print, Qum, Islamic Publications Office affliated to Jāmiaʿah Mudarisīn Ḥawzah ʿIlmīyah Qum, 1362 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 30.

addition, the official narrators of tradition and the supporters of the Umayyid government suppressed any narrations which were in support of the 'family of the Prophet' and their followers. Many of these traditions were concealed due to political considerations.

Baseless Justifications

One of the important questions that comes up during this discussion is why a ban was enacted on compiling and narrating traditions during the time of the early caliphs. What were the grounds on which the Second Caliph declared this prohibition? This is while it is quite well known that the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) (in reality, the things that he said and did) are decisive arguments in the religion of Islam just like the Quran. In fact, the Quran and the traditions complement one another. Following these traditions is an obligation upon all Muslims, and the Quran says that when the Prophet (ṣ) speaks, he is not speaking based on his own whims and desires: "Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him."[168]

God has explicitly declared the words and commands of the Prophet (ṣ) as being decisive arguments and proofs for all Muslims. The Holy Quran says: "So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you."[169] It is mentioned that 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar has narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) that he pointed to his lips, and said: "Oh son of 'Umar, I swear by the Lord who holds my life in his hands, that nothing comes from between these two but the truth; therefore write down what I say."[170]

Knowing the importance of prophetic traditions and their necessity in educating people in the realities of Islam, can it really be said that it was correct for the Second Caliph to

---

[168] Surah Najm, Verses 3 and 4.

[169] Surah Ḥashr, Verse 7.

[170] Refer to: Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-Rāwī, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 62.

prevent people from writing down and recording these traditions? The Second Caliph had written a directive addressed to all the various territories of the Muslim nation, saying: "Whoever has written down a tradition from the Prophet (ṣ) must destroy it." Was this directive compatible with the spirit of Islam, which always insists on the expansion and spread of knowledge and learning?

In answering these questions, the supporters of the caliph and his policies are left helpless but to create a sort of philosophy for their answer. They claim that Abū Bakr gave the following reason for the prohibition of the narration and compilation of traditions: "The reason for the prohibition of narrating prophetic traditions is so these traditions were not mixed (confused) with the verses of the Holy Quran."[171]

This is an exceedingly baseless pretext for enacting such a policy. It is common knowledge that on the day that the Prophet (ṣ) passed away, all of the chapters and verses of the Quran were already determined and preserved. The writers and memorizers of the Quran had already preserved the entirety of the book to their strong memories, and the chapters and verses were already ordered. No one was able to add or remove a single letter to the Quran. In view of such a situation, could the recording of traditions have really been detrimental to the integrity of the Quran? This does not seem to be a logical reason.

In addition, the Holy Quran is unique in terms of its eloquence, smoothness, fluency, appeal, and sentence structure. There is no other compilation like it, and it is impossible to mistake even the highest forms of literature with it. Even the sermons of the Prophet (ṣ) or the words of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) in the Nahj al-Balāghah, which is the peak of eloquence in expression, can never be mistaken with the words of the Quran. When the Infallibles ('a) gave sermons, the verses of the Quran were mentioned frequently in their speeches, yet it was clear for everyone where one began and where one ended.

---

[171] Abawariiah, Ibid, p. 43.

Political Motivations

History shows us that this prohibition had political motives as its main driving force. The main motivation in banning the writing and narration of traditions was an attempt to suppress the traditions which Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) had compiled throughout his life. As a result of his closeness to the Prophet (ṣ), Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) had compiled a very large collection of traditions and these contained many different types of Islamic knowledge. Possession of such a vast treasure naturally gave him a position of distinction and status among the rest of the Muslims. The holder of these compilations was in reality the holder of Islamic knowledge, and the one who had access to such knowledge possessed authority in the religion as well. This was something which the ban attempted to prevent.

Did the Prophet Prohibit the Compilation of Traditions?

Some narrators of tradition attribute this act of prohibition o the Prophet (ṣ) himself. They claim that the Prophet (ṣ) said: 'Do not write down anything from me but the Quran, and whoever has written anything (besides the Quran) must destroy it."[172] History shows us that this is a completely baseless tradition. First of all, Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was the best student of the Prophet (ṣ), and he narrated many traditions from him; these traditions were then handed down to successive Imams. If the Prophet (ṣ) had prohibited the compilation of traditions, then Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) would never have disobeyed him in this matter.

Secondly, many letters on various subjects, such as religious rulings, religious precepts, judicial matters, and politics were written down in the time of the Prophet (ṣ) himself. Narrators and historians have recorded these traditions, alongside their authentic chains of narration. A very small number of these letters relate to inviting people towards Islam; the majority were written on reconciliation, Islamic punishments (ḥūdūd), as

---

[172] Aḥmad Ḥanbal, Masnad, Dār al-Fikr, vol. 3, p. 12.
- ʿAbdullah Dārami, Sunan, Dār al-Fikr, vol. 1, p. 119.
- Abawariiah, Ibid, p. 42.

well as different religious rules and principles. Therefore, how can anyone believe that the Prophet (ṣ) prohibited people from writing down anything but the Holy Quran while 300 letters (216 of which are now in our possession) were written in front of his very own eyes.

The Shia: The First Compilers of Tradition

Luckily, the Shia were heavily involved in this field from the very first days of Islam. They followed Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) in narrating, recording, and compiling traditions, and the valuable results of their efforts are still with us today. It is known that Imam 'Alī ('a) was the first individual to collect the traditions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). The Prophet (ṣ) would dictate various traditions and Imam 'Alī ('a) would write them down. These traditions were then compiled in the form of book.

In time, this book was passed down successively to the res of the Imams ('a) until it reached Imam Bāqir ('a). One day, Ḥakam ibn 'Utaybah saw this book in the possession of Imam Bāqir ('a). The story behind this is that Ḥakam had developed a difference of opinion with Imam Bāqir ('a) on a particular issue, and the Imam ('a) showed him the specific tradition related to that issue in the book and said: "This is the writing of 'Alī ('a) and it was the dictation of the Prophet of God (ṣ)."[173]

In addition, Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) had compiled another book about 'Dīyāt' and this book was called 'Saḥīfah'. This work was in the form of a scroll and the Imam ('a) would attach it to his sword. It has been narrated from the Imam ('a) that he said: "There is no book with us that we read other than the Book of God and this Saḥīfah". The Saḥīfah contained information about the religious rulings of wounds and injuries.[174] These words of Imam 'Alī ('a) about the Saḥīfah,

---

[173] Najjāshī, Fihrist Asmā' Muṣanfī al-Shī'ah, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 255 (Translated by Muḥammad ibn 'Adhāfir).

- Al-Ṣadr, Sayyid Ḥasan, al-Shia wa Fanūn al-Islam, Lebanon, Ṣaydā, 1331 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 65.

[174] Sharaf al-Dīn, al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, Mu'alaf al-Shī'ah Fī al-Ṣadr al-Islām, Tehran,

clearly indicate that at that time, no other book existed besides the Quran, and Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) was the first compiler of traditions and jurisprudential rulings. Moreover, Suyūṭī has mentioned Imam ʿAlī (ʿa) and his son Imam Ḥasan (ʿa) as being the supporters of the compilation of traditions.[175]

If the Ahl al-Sunnah, due to the prohibition of traditions, did not narrate and record traditions for 100 years or more, it is fortunate that the Shias were pioneers in this field and prevented many valuable narrations from being lost. Besides Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), Abū Rāfiʿ (a companion of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa)) was also involved in compiling a book. This book was called al-Sunan wa al-Aḥkām wa al-Qaḍāyā.[176] He collected various rulings, such as those related to prayer, fasting, Zakāt, Ḥajj, and various judicial matters, and compiled them into book form. If we consider this the first book of tradition that was compiled by the companions, then we can consider this the first book of jurisprudence of its kind ever to be compiled.[177] Also noteworthy is that, at the time that Abū Rāfiʿ compiled his book, the writing of traditions was considered a great crime by the government.

After Abū Rāfiʿ, Shia writers busied themselves in the compilation of traditions even though it was considered illegal by the authorities. Through these means, they protected the words of the Infallibles (ʿa) from distortion and other potential dangers. This program of action began from the time of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ʿa) and continued until the time of Imam Bāqir (ʿa). The progress was so great during the time of Imam Bāqir (ʿa) that when the decree of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz came, which rescinded the prohibition on the collection and

---

Maktabah Najāh, p. 14-15. The Late Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr has written: "I have with me a copy of this book, and Būkhārī, in the section of (Kītābat al-ʿIlm) has narrated from this book." (Ta'sīs al-Shīʿah Lil ʿUlūm al-Islam, Tehran, Manshūrāt al-'Alamī, p. 279).

[175] Tadrīb al-Rāwī Fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawi, Beirut, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1409 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 61.

[176] Najjāshī, Fihrīst Asmā' Muṣanfī al-Shīʿah, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 4.

[177] For a discussion on the recording and compilation of traditions, please refer to: Jaʿfar Subḥānī, Buḥūth Fī Milal wa al-Naḥl, Second Edition, Lajīnnah Idārat al-Ḥawzah al-ʿIlmīyah Biqum Muqadissah, Iran, 1410 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 58-73.

compilation of traditions, each of the prominent students and companions of the Fifth Imam ('a) had already memorized thousands of traditions.[178]

Muḥammad ibn Mūslim was one of the important Shia personalities who narrated traditions for a long period of time. He was known to be a virtuous man and an example of the prominent students of the Imam ('a) in jurisprudence and traditions. He was from the city of Kūfah, and while living in Medina for a period of four years, he would continuously visit Imam Bāqir ('a). After Imam Bāqir ('a), he began to visit Imam Ṣādiq ('a) in turn. Muḥammad ibn Muslim is quoted as saying: "Whatever matter came to mind, I would ask Imam Bāqir ('a), and he would give me an answer in such a manner that I learned 30,000 traditions from him ('a) and 16,000 traditions from Imam Ṣādiq ('a)."[179] Muḥammad ibn Mūslim compiled a book by the name of *Arba'mi'ah Mas'alah* (meaning 400 issues). This book was the answer to 400 issues that he had heard from the Fifth and Sixth Imams ('a).[180]

Another one of the fruits of Imam Bāqir's ('a) school wa Jābir ibn Yazīd Ju'fī. He was a Kufan who immigrated to th city of Medina to benefit from the presence of Imam Bāqir ('a). Under the guidance of the Imam ('a), he reached a high level of knowledge and learning. Jābir, through the use of the vast knowledge of the Imam ('a), ended up writing many books and compilations. The books of Jābir are as follows: 1- The Book of Commentary, 2- The Book of Rarities, 3- The Book of Virtues,

---

[178] Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Suyūṭī insists on introducing the founders of the Islamic sciences as being from the Ahl al-Sunnah. He has mentioned: "The first individual who wrote a book on jurisprudence was Abū Ḥanīfah." This is while Abū Ḥanīfah was born in the year 100 Hijrī and passed away in the year 150 Hijrī, while Abū Rāfi' had passed away 60 years before Abū Ḥanīfah's birth. (Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, Ta'sīs al-Shī'ah Lil 'Ūlūm al-Islām, Tehran, Manshūrāt al-'Alamī, p. 298). Therefore, the Ahl al-Sunnah began compiling books of traditions and jurisprudence in the beginning of the second century Hijrī, while the Shia began from the very first days of Islam's revelation.

[179] Shaykh Mufīd, al-Ikhtiṣāṣ, researched and edited by: 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, Qum, Manshūrāt Jama'at al-Mudarisīn Fī Ḥawzah 'Ilmīyah Biqum Muqadissah, p. 201.
- Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Marifat al-Rijāl (Famously known as Rijāl Kashshī), researched and edited by: Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, p. 163 (Number 276).

[180] Sharaf al-Dīn, al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, Mu'alaf al-Shī'ah Fī al-Ṣadr al-Islām, Tehran, Maktabah Najāḥ, p. 64.

4- The Book of the Camel, 5- The Book of Ṣiffīn, 6- The Book of Nahrawān, 7- The Book on the Death of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, and 8- The Book on the Death of Imam Ḥusayn.[181]

Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik

After the death of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik succeeded the caliphate. Yazīd was a hedonistic ruler who was not concerned with the religious or ethical precepts of Islam. His rule is counted as one of the darkest periods in the Umayyid dynasty. Nothing of importance, in the way of public works and the like, came about during his caliphate either.

During the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Yazīd was the nominated successor. During this period of time, he hid his true nature and acted in an acceptable manner in front of the people. Through this method, he gained the goodwill of the public and as a result, when he succeeded the caliphate, the people welcomed him warmly. One key ingredient to his acceptance was that in the early days of his caliphate, he promised to continue the policies of his predecessor, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

This promise held much attraction to the people since they ad tasted a bit of truth and justice in the time of the previous .aliph. Unfortunately, it wasn't long after his succession that this hope was transformed into hopelessness. The caliph soon reneged on his promises and showed his true colors, revealing himself as a world-class tyrant.

The False Testimony

One of the interesting things which has been narrated in the history books is that Yazīd went so far as to persuade forty individuals from the notable personalities and respected elders to testify to his immunity from sin. This group gave witness that the caliphs are not subject to any accounting on the Day

[181] Sharaf al-Dīn, al-Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn, Mu'alaf al-Shīʿah Fī al-Ṣadr al-Islām, Tehran, Maktabah Najāḥ, p. 36.

of Judgment, nor any form of punishment.[182] The idea was to open the door for Yazīd to commit any sin that he wanted without fear of the people's criticism.

The testimony of this group of men was but one part of the Umayyid government's policy towards strengthening their rule. The Umayyids also brought into existence another group which was called the Murji'ah.[183] The Murji'ah's religious ideology was a useful tool towards strengthening the Umayyid government and covering up their crimes. Groups such as the Murji'ah would justify the un-Islamic actions of the government through various, clever rationalizations.

Ibn Qutaybah Daynāwarī has written: "Initially, Yazīd was liked by the Quraysh because he showed himself to be a just and reasonable ruler. If he had continued to behave in the same manner as ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, then the people would have similarly accepted and welcomed him. Unfortunately, he acted in a manner contrary to what was expected when he reached power. In essence, he continued the behavior of his brother Walīd. His behavior soon inspired a wave of hatred from the Muslims and this continued to the point that the people decided to depose him from the caliphate. Yazīd paid s little attention to the rights and wishes of the people that eve a group of the Quraysh and a number of the Umayyids protested his actions.

Instead of responding to the criticism of the people and changing his ways, Yazīd simply clamped down on anyone who posed a threat to him. He ended up accusing a group of the Qurayshī leaders of upsetting public order, rebellion, and planning a coup. He ordered his uncle Muḥammad ibn Marwān to arrest them and to place them in prison. This group ended up imprisoned for a period of two years until Ibn Marwān had them killed by poisoning.

In addition to these individuals, Yazīd arrested another

---

[182] Suyūṭī, Tārīkh al-Khūlafā, researched by Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-Madanī, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 246.

[183] The Murji'ah were a sect which considered faith to be an issue of the heart, and they did not consider any sins to be incompatible with faith.

group of thirty leaders from the Quraysh. After fining them an exhoribitant amount of money, he confiscated their possessions, wealth, and real estate. They were subject to torture and exiled to various places in Syria, as well as other regions where they lived the rest of their years in poverty and deprivation. Yazīd did not suffice with even these actions; he ordered that all the people who had any contact with them be hung on charges of collaboration with rebels and anti government forces."[184]

Singing, Dancing, and Gambling

The early Umayyid caliphs would fill their times of leisure with hearing news of war, stories of brave acts of the past Arabs, and verses of poetry. During the time of the Umayyids (such as Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik), these things were replaced with singing, dancing, and various types of gambling.

Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik

Hishām was a ruler who was known to be miserly, crude in behavior, tyrannical, and merciless towards his enemies.[185] He was known for his eloquence and oratory skills. He was also known for his vast accumulation of wealth and land. It has been noted that during the time of his caliphate, some of the industries in the Muslim nation flourished. Yet, since he was a cold-hearted individual and didn't care much for the common people, life became rather difficult for the masses overall. It is also interesting to see that since the caliph was quite cold hearted and uncaring, historians have noted that this kind of feeling began to permeate into the rest of society as well. The custom of doing good works and cooperating with others ceased to be acted upon, and this reached a point where the people did not really care for one another, nor did they attempt

---

[184] Al-Imāmah wa al-Sīyāsah, Third Edition, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1382 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 125.

[185] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, vol. 3, p. 70.

to help each other with their problems and issues.[186]

The Influence of Corrupt and Deviant Individuals

Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī, the famous scholar and historian, has described the social and political conditions of the society of that time in detail. He has described the behavior and actions of Hishām as follows: "With the death of Yazīd the Second, the caliphate reached his brother Hishām. Hishām took hold of the caliphate during a time when he was able to quell domestic rebellions and upheavals, and quench the fires of foreign wars. During this time period, the central government was threatened by the Turkmens and Khazārs from the north. From the east, the leaders of the ʿAbbāsids were quietly plotting the destruction of the Umayyids and the establishment of their own caliphate. In the interior of the empire, the masses were angry, and the flames of the Khawārij, who were courageous and warrior spirited, were blazing.

In these internal and external conflicts, the best youth of the Arabs were being killed. Internal politics and personal grudge were also taking their toll. Due to the previous caliph's blir reliance on his governors and local advisors, these positio had fallen to unworthy and selfish leaders. Due to thes individuals, the people's anger had reached fever pitch, and the masses were disgusted with the situation at hand.

During these important times, the Muslim society was in need of a helping hand to save the government from its course of destruction. There is no doubt that Hishām was better than the previous caliph, Yazīd. During the time of Hishām, the government was purified of many unqualified individuals, and a more sober attitude was adopted in place of the frivolous one that had existed previously.

Still, the severity and raw treatment of Hishām reached the point of harshness, and his frugality gave him a reputation as a miser. He also had some behavioral shortcomings which made the situation even worse: he was despotic, skeptical,

[186] Masʿūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 205.

shortsighted, distrustful, and pessimistic. In order to neutralize the plots that were being hatched against him, he engaged in deceptive behavior, and spied on large groups of people. He also was quick to believe things about others, and with one inkling of distrust, he would execute people, even if they had a flawless track record and had proven to be trustworthy. This extreme lack of trust caused a series of short lived nominations and removals in various government posts. This state of affairs later proved to have very negative consequences for Hishām and his government."[187]

Imam Bāqir in Syria

One of the important events during the life of Imam Bāqir ('a) was his trip to Syria. Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik, one of the caliphs during the time of the Imam ('a), was always fearful of his extraordinary rank and the people's love towards him. Since he also knew that his followers considered him as the Imam ('a), he was perpetually working to prevent the spread of the spiritual influence and numbers of these followers.

During one of the years that Imam Bāqir ('a) and his son Imam Ṣādiq ('a) were at the Ḥajj pilgrimage, Hishām was also participating in the pilgrimage. During the days of the Ḥajj, mam Ṣādiq ('a) gave a sermon to a group of the Muslims about he matter of the imamate of the family of the Prophet. Naturally, this event was immediately reported to Hishām by his agents who were present everywhere. Hishām considered the very existence of Imam Bāqir ('a) to be a threat to his government and so he became severely shaken by this sermon. Still, perhaps due to other considerations, he didn't arrest the Imam ('a) and his son ('a) at the Ḥajj pilgrimage itself. Instead, when he reached his capital city of Damascus, he immediately ordered the governor of Medina to have the Imam ('a) and his son ('a) sent towards Syria.

Without having a choice in the matter, the Imam ('a) left

---

[187] Sayyid Amīr 'Alī, A Short History of the Arabs, translated by 'Afīf al-Ba'albakī, Second Edition, Dār al-'Ilm Lil Malāyīn, 1967 A.D., p. 139.

Medina with his son ('a) and entered the city of Damascus. Hishām, in order to lower the greatness of the Imam ('a) and to raise his own position in front of his officials, did not allow a meeting to take place for a period of three days. It is possible that Hishām spent these three days thinking about what he should do in order to lessen the Imam's ('a) position in the eyes of the people.

A Shooting Competition

Interestingly enough, if the government of Hishām had made itself the focus of learning and scholarly knowledge, then it would have had enough eloquent and knowledgeable scholars who could have at least discussed and debated various issues with the Imam ('a) at some level. Yet Hishām's government, much like other Umayyid governments which came before him, focused mostly on poets, storytellers, and eulogists who would spend their time praising the rulers.

Since his government sorely lacked in the field of knowledge, Hishām knew that if he tried to organize a debate with the scholars that he had, his scholars would come out it completely shamed and defeated. As of a result of this, he decided to engage the Imam ('a) in another way which he thought would assure him victory in the eyes of the people.

Hishām decided to hold a shooting competition and have the Imam ('a) participate. Hishām assumed that with the defeat of the Imam ('a) in such a competition, he would be lowered in the eyes of the people because they would see him as only a man of religion and not a man of the real world. In preparation, he gathered a group of people before the Imam ('a) had entered the palace, and had them begin to shoot at targets. Imam Bāqir ('a) entered the gathering and sat for a period of time watching.

Suddenly, Hishām turned to the Imam ('a) and said, "Do you wish to participate in this archery competition?" The Imam ('a) replied: "I have become old and my time for shooting is past, so excuse me from this." Hishām, who assumed that he had gained an excellent opportunity and was about to

embarrass the Imam (ʿa), insisted, and at the same time, signaled for one of the notables of the Ummayids to give him a bow. The Imam (ʿa) reached out and took the bow. He set an arrow on the string and then took aim. He released the arrow, and the arrow hit the exact center of the target. Then he took a second arrow and notched it on the string; when he released his second shot, it hit the other arrow exactly and split it dead center. The third arrow again hit the second and split that one as well. In this fashion, the Imam (ʿa) shot nine arrows, all of which hit the previous arrows and split them in half.

This amazing scene affected everyone who was present, and they were left with amazement and surprise. Hishām, who had calculated incorrectly on all counts, was also taken by surprise. Uncontrollably, he said: "Amazing oh Abū Jaʿfar. You are the master of archers from amongst the Arabs and non Arabs; how was it that you said that you had become old?" Then Hishām looked downwards for several moments and he sat quietly thinking. Then he took Imam Bāqir (ʿa) and his son (ʿa) and sat them next to himself. He began to honor and praise them in an exceptional and unusual manner. Then he faced Imam Bāqir (ʿa) and said: "The Quraysh, due to the light of your existence, are worthy of being the masters amongst the Arabs and Ajams (non Arabs). Tell me, who taught you this skill of archery and how long did it take you to master it?" Imam Bāqir (ʿa) responded: "You know that the people of Medina practice this art; in the days of my youth, I also spent a period engaged in it, but later I left it— today, since you insisted, I accepted unwillingly."

Hishām said: "Does your son Jaʿfar (Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa)) also have this level of proficiency in shooting?" Imam Bāqir (ʿa) replied: "We, the Household, are the 'Perfection of The Religion' and the 'Completion of the Blessings'. The verse 'Today we have perfected your religion for you' has been revealed about us and we succeed one another in this. The earth will never remain empty of one of us."[188]

---

[188] "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and

A Debate with the Archbishop of the Christians

Although the palace of Hishām was not really a place for knowledge and learning, still, many opportunities came about where the knowledge of the Imam ('a) was shown to everyone there. Before Imam Bāqir ('a) left the city of Damascus, a particularly amazing opportunity presented itself to awaken the minds of the masses. Through this opportunity, the people were allowed to see a manifestation of the Imam's ('a) vast knowledge.

What ended up taking place was that Hishām did not have any pretext to hurt the Imam's position, and so, he did not have a choice but to allow the Imam ('a) to return back to the city of Medina. At the time that Imam Bāqir ('a) and his son ('a) were leaving the palace of the caliph, they saw a large gathering at the far ends of an arena, opposite to the palace. There were a large number of people who were all sitting down waiting for someone. Imam Bāqir ('a) inquired about them and the reason behind their gathering. They replied: "These are Christian priests and monks who gather in these large numbers every year waiting for the arrival of their great Archbishop. When h arrives at this yearly gathering, these scholars can then ask hi their questions and get answers to them." Imam Bāqir ('a entered into this gathering in a manner where the people did not really recognize him. The news of this was relayed to Hishām immediately. Hishām commissioned some of his agents to go into this gathering and see what was taking place.

It was not long until the Archbishop arrived. With much admiration and veneration, the people welcomed him, and he took his seat in front of the gathering. He looked into the crowd, and his eye was drawn to the face of Imam Bāqir ('a)– he felt that this was not an ordinary man. He faced the Imam ('a) and asked: "Are you a Christian or are you from the Muslims?" The Imam ('a) replied: "From the Muslims." The Archbishop asked: "Are you from their scholars or from their ignorant ones?" The Imam ('a) replied: "I am not from the

---

have chosen for you Islam as your religion." Surah Māida, Verse 3.

ignorant ones." The Archbishop then asked: "Should I ask a question first or will you?" The Imam ('a) replied: "If you wish, you may ask."

The Archbishop asked: "Why do you Muslims claim that the people of paradise drink and eat food, but they have no need for using the restroom? Do you have any examples in this world for this matter, so that it can be made clear?" The Imam ('a) responded: "Yes, a clear example in this world is that in the womb of the mother, a child feeds, but it does not go to the bathroom."

The Archbishop replied: "How wonderful, but you said you were not from the scholars?" The Imam ('a) said: "I did not say this; rather I said I am not from the ignorant ones." The Archbishop then said: "I have another question." The Imam ('a) replied: "Please go ahead." The Archbishop asked: "On what basis do you believe that the fruits and blessings of paradise never decrease, and however much they are consumed, they still remain and do not lessen? Can you show a clear example of this from the phenomena of this world?"

The Imam ('a) replied: "Yes, the clear example of this is found in (the perceptible phenomenon of) fire. If you light another flame (from an existing flame), and repeat this one hundred times, the first flame will remain as it was and nothing will have decreased from it."

The Archbishop asked every difficult question that came to mind and all of them were answered clearly and completely by the Imam ('a). He was soon left looking extremely incompetent and weak, and he became angry. He said: "Oh people, have you brought a great scholar whose knowledge is higher than mine in order to disgrace me and to show the Muslims that their leader is superior and more learned than ours? I swear by God that I will never speak to you again, and if I remain alive until next year, you will not see me in your midst." He said these words, rose out of his seat, and left the gathering.

An Unworthy Accusation

The news of this event quickly spread throughout Damascus, and the people were very happy with what had taken place. Hishām, instead of becoming happy with this ideological victory, became even more fearful of the spiritual influence of the Imam (ʿa). In attempting to minimize the spread of the Imam's (ʿa) influence, Hishām sent him a message insisting that he leave Damascus that very same day. Hishām also attempted to slander the Imam (ʿa) in order to diminish what had taken place. In doing so, he accused the Imam (ʿa) of becoming inclined towards Christianity and he spread news of this throughout the Muslim world.

He wrote letters to some of his governors, saying the following: "Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, the son of Abū Turāb, came to me alongside his son. When I sent them back to Medina, they went to see some priests, and became inclined towards Christianity. However, due to the family relationship that they have with me, I have overlooked their faults and decided not to punish them. When these two individuals arrive in your city announce to the people that I am averse to their actions."

The desperate efforts of Hishām in hiding the truth of what had taken place were ultimately unsuccessful, and the people heard what had actually happened. Those who saw the reality of the deep knowledge of the Imam (ʿa) increased in number. As a result, the compulsory trip that began with threats of violence ended full of amazing results and the education of the masses to the reality of the imamate.[189]

The Debates of Imam Bāqir

During the time of Imam Bāqir (ʿa), there were a number of active groups, such as the Muʿtazilah, the Khawārij, and the Murjīʾah. Some of these were purely religious sects, while others

[189] Ṭabarī has given a detailed account of the events which took place during the Imam's (a) trip in his book Dalāʿīl al-Imāmah (p. 105-107). The Late Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, in his book Amān al-Akhtār (p. 62), the Late ʿAllāmah Majlisī, in his Biḥār al-ʾAnwār (vol. 46, p. 307-313), as well as others, have narrated from Ṭabarī as well. It should be noted that there are some small differences in the various narrations.

were politico-religious in their nature. Imam Bāqir (ʿa) was much like a solid wall who stood against their deviant ideologies. Through his debates and discussions with them, he proved to them that the intellectual and ideological foundations upon which they stood were baseless. As an example, let us look over Imam Bāqir's (ʿa) exchange with Nāfiʿ ibn Azraq, one of the leaders of the Khawārij.

One day, Nāfiʿ went to the Imam (ʿa) and asked him about certain issues related to the lawful and the forbidden (the ḥalāl and the ḥarām). The Imam (ʿa) answered his questions and then said to Nāfiʿ: "Say to these Māriqīn (those who have gone out of the religion): 'Why have you considered the separation from Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ʿa) as being lawful, when before that, you would shed your blood next to him and in obedience to his commands, and you considered aiding him as a cause for gaining closeness to God?'"

Then Imam Bāqir (ʿa) added: "They are going to say that he set up an arbitrator in the religion of God. Tell them that: 'God, in the shariah of his Prophet (ṣ), set up two arbitrators in two situations; one of these was in the case of a dispute between a wife and a husband, where the Quran states: 'If ye fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation: For Allah hath full knowledge, and is acquainted with all things.'[190]

The second arbitrator was Saʿad ibn Maʿādh, who was appointed by the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) as the arbitrator between himself and the Jewish tribe of Banī Qurayẓah; Saʿad gave his opinion based on the decree of God." Then the Imam (ʿa) added: "Do you not know that Amīr al-Mu'minīn (ʿa) accepted the arbitration on the condition that the two arbitrators judge based on the decrees of the Quran, and that they not exceed the limits set by the Quran; he made it conditional that if they judged in opposition to the rules of the Quran, then the arbitration would be rejected. When they said to Amīr al-

[190] Surah Nisā, Verse 35.

Mu'minīn ('a): 'The arbitration that you selected ended up judging to your loss,' he responded: 'I did not appoint him as an arbitrator, I appointed the Book of God as the arbitrator.' Then, how do the Māriqīn consider the arbitration of the Quran and the repudiation of judging against the dictates of the Quran as deviancy, and yet, they do not consider their own religious innovations and false accusations as deviancy?" When Nāfi' ibn Azraq heard this, he said: "I swear by God, I had neither heard these words before, nor had its possibility occurred to me; this is the very truth, God willing"[191]

[191] Ṭabarsī, Iḥtijāj, Najaf, al-Maṭba'at al-Murtaḍāwiya, 1350 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 176.

The Sixth Imam

Imam Jaʿfar Ṣādiq

A Brief Look at the Life of Imam Ṣādiq

The name of the sixth Imam (ʿa) is Jaʿfar, his agnomen is Abū ʿAbdullah, and his title is Ṣādiq. His honorable father was Imam Bāqir (ʿa) and his mother Umm Farwah. He was born on the 17th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal, in the year 83 Hijrī, in the city of Medina. He passed away at the age of 65 during the year 148, and was buried next to his father in the famous graveyard of Baqīʿ.

Caliphs Who Lived during the Time of the Imam

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) reached the imamate during the year 114 Hijrī. The period of his imamate was contemporary with the end of the rule of the Umayyids, and the beginning of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty.

The following Umayyid caliphs were contemporary with Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa):
1- Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (105-125 Hijrī)
2- Walīd ibn Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (125-126 Hijrī)
3- Yazīd ibn Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (126 Hijrī)
4- Ibrāhīm ibn Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (70 days in the year 1: Hijrī)
5- Marwān ibn Muḥammad [famously known as Marwān Ḥimār] (126- 132 Hijrī)

The following ʿAbbāsid caliphs were also contemporary to Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa):
1- ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad [famously known as Saffāḥ] (132-137 Hijrī)
2- Abū Jaʿfar [famously known as Manṣūr Dawānīqī] (137-158 Hijrī)

The Vast Knowledge of Imam Ṣādiq

History has recorded a great deal in regards to the vastness of Imam Ṣādiq's ('a) knowledge. Not only has his knowledge been confirmed by well known Shia scholars, but he is also well known amongst the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah as well. Famous jurisprudents and scholars acknowledge this reality and praise the depth and breadth of his knowledge.

Abū Ḥanīfah, the famous leader of the Sunni Hanafi sect, is narrated to have said: "I have not seen (anyone) more learned and scholarly than Ja'far ibn Muḥammad."[192] He is also quoted as saying: "When Manṣūr (Dawānīqī) summoned Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, he also summoned me and said: 'The people have become captivated with Ja'far ibn Muḥammad; prepare a list of difficult questions in order to defeat him.' I prepared forty difficult issues. One day, Manṣūr, who was at 'Ḥīrah' at that time, summoned me. When I entered his assembly, I saw that Ja'far ibn Muḥammad was sitting to the right of him. When I saw him, I was so taken in with his presence and greatness that even the seeing of Manṣūr, who was a powerful king, did not have such an effect on me. I gave my greetings and, with the permission of Manṣūr, sat down.

Manṣūr faced him and said: 'This is Abū Ḥanīfah.' He answered: 'Yes, I know him.' Then Manṣūr looked at me and said: 'Oh Abū Ḥanīfah, ask your questions from Abū 'Abdillāh.' At this point, I began to ask my questions. Every matter that I set forth, he would answer by saying: 'Your opinion in this matter is such, the opinion of the people of Medina is such, and our opinion is such.' In some matters, he would agree with our opinion, in other matters he would agree with the people of Medina, and sometimes he would disagree with both. In this manner, I stated the forty issues and he answered them all. When Abū Ḥanīfah came to this point, he motioned towards Imam Ṣādiq ('a), and said: '(He is) the most knowledgeable of the people, and the most aware in the

---

[192] Dhahabī, Shamsh al-Dīn Muḥammad, Tadhkīrat al-Ḥuffāẓ, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 166.

differences of the people in jurisprudential matters and rulings.'"[193]

Mālik, the leader and founder of the Sunni Malikī branch, has said: "For a period of time, I would meet with Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, and always, I saw him in one of three states: either he was praying, fasting, or reciting the Quran; and I never saw him narrate a tradition without being in a state of ritual purity (Wudhū).[194] In relation to Ja'far ibn Muḥammad's knowledge, worship, and piety, no one has ever laid eyes on a better man, nor have any ears heard, nor has the heart of any human being ever experienced such excellence."[195]

Shaykh Mufīd has written: "So much knowledge has been narrated from him (Imam Ṣādiq ('a)) that it has become proverbial amongst the people and the news of it has spread everywhere. From no single individual in his family has so much knowledge and wisdom been narrated before."[196] Ibn Ḥajar Haytamī has written: "He has narrated so much knowledge that it has become proverbial amongst the people, and the news of it has spread everywhere. The biggest leaders (of jurisprudence and traditions) such as: Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, Ibn Jarīḥ, Mālik, Sufyān Thawrī, Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah, Abū Ḥanīfah, Shu'bah, and Ayūb Sajistānī have all narrated traditions from him."[197]

Abū Baḥr Jāḥiẓ, one of the famous scholars from the 3rd century, has said: "Ja'far ibn Muḥammad is an individual whose knowledge and learning has filled the world and it is said that Abū Ḥanīfah and Sufyān Thawrī are from his students. (The fact) that these two are his students is sufficient proof of

---

[193] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 47, p. 217.
- Ḥaydar, Asad, Al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbi'ah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 4, p. 335.

[194] Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1404 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 88.

[195] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbi'ah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 53.

[196] Al-'Irshād, Qum, Manshūrāt Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 270.

[197] Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Maḥraqah, Cairo, Maktabah Cairo, 1385 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 201.

the greatness of his knowledge."[198]

Sayyid Amīr ʿAlī has pointed out the various religious sects and philosophical schools of thought during the time of the Umayyids and has written that: "Initially, religious rulings and opinions had taken on a philosophical tone only among the 'Sādāt' and the 'Fāṭimīs'. The spread of knowledge during that time had kindled the spirit of debate and inquiry, and philosophical debates and discussions had spread to all circles. It is necessary to mention who the head of this intellectual movement was: the founder of this movement, which first blossomed in the city of Medina, was the great grandchild of Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿa), Imam Jaʿfar Ṣādiq (ʿa). Imam Jaʿfar Ṣādiq (ʿa) was an active researcher and an amazing thinker who was deeply knowledgeable in the sciences of his time. It was he who founded the first philosophical school of Islam.

In his classes, not only did those attend who would go on to later establish their own jurisprudential schools of thought, but philosophers and students of philosophy from far flung regions also attended. Ḥasan Baṣri, the founder of the philosophical school of Baṣrah, and Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭā, the founder of the Muʿtazilah sect, were from his students."[199]

Ibn Khallakān, the famous historian, has written: "He was one of the Imams from the twelve (Imams) of the Imami sect, and one of the great ones from the descendants of the Prophet (ṣ). Due to the veracity and truthfulness of his words, he was called Ṣādiq (by the people). His merits and greatness are so famous that there is no need for their description or explanation. Abū Mūsā Jābir ibn Ḥayyān Tartusi was his student. Jābir compiled a book containing 1,000 pages which drew on Imam Jaʿfar Ṣādiq's (ʿa) teachings and contained 500 treatises."[200]

---

[198] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbiʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 55. (Narrated from Rasā'il Jāḥiẓ)

[199] Mukhtasar al-Tārīkh al-ʿArab, edited by ʿAfīf al-Baʿalbakī, Beirut, Dār al-ʿIlm Lil Malāyīn, 1967 A.D., p. 193.

[200] Wafāyat al-ʿAyān, researched by Doctor Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-

The Political and Social Conditions during the Time of Imam Ṣādiq

Among the various Imams, the time of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was unique in its social and political conditions, and he in fact lived in such conditions that were not present during the time of any of the other Imams. The reason behind this was that this was a period of weakness and instability for the Umayyid government, and the time of the rise of the 'Abbāsids; these two groups were entangled in a power struggle with one other. The 'Abbāsids initiated their movement during the rule of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik and in the year 129 Hijrī, they began a military campaign against the Umayyids. In the year 132 Hijrī, they a gained decisive victory over the Umayyids, and established their own government.

Since the Umayyids were engaged in these political difficulties and conflicts, they did not have the opportunity to levy pressure on the Imam ('a) and his followers as they had done during the time of Imam Sajjād ('a). Moreover, once the 'Abbāsids reached power, due to the fact that they had revolted against the government with the slogan of supporting th family of the Prophet and seeking retribution for what ha been done to them, no pressure was levied from their sic either. The Abbasids were also busy building up their own government which had just been established. Therefore, this time period was a period of calm and relative freedom for Imam Ṣādiq ('a) and the Shia. It was also an extremely good opportunity for intellectual and religious activities.

The Social Conditions of the Imam's Time

In terms of culture and learning, the time of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was a time of various intellectual and religious movements. During this time, an unprecedented inclination and desire towards knowledge manifested itself in the society, and various sciences, such as the science of the recitation of the Quran, the

---

Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 327.

science of Quranic commentary, the science of traditions, the science of jurisprudence, and the science of theology all began to blossom. Natural sciences such as medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics also began to spread. The social situation was such that every person had their own opinions on these matters, and they would present them for debate and discussion. A very strange thirst for knowledge appeared in the society and it was necessary for Imam Ṣādiq ('a) to quench this thirst.

The causes of this thirst for learning and the various intellectual movements can be summarized in the following points:

1- It is apparent that Islam affords a great deal of freedom for intellectual thinking and development. While the 'Abbāsids played a part in the manifestation of this social phenomenon, the root cause of it is found in the teachings of the religion.

2- The Muslim community was one which was religious in nature, and heavily influenced by Islamic teachings. The encouragement of the Prophet (ṣ) towards gaining knowledge, as well as the encouragement and invitation of the Quran towards knowledge, learning, reasoning, and reflection were the foundational pillars of this movement.

3- The various nations who had accepted Islam had a history of intellectual thinking as well. When we look at groups such as the Iranians, the Egyptians, and the Syrians, we find that they each possessed their own respective civilizations and heritage. These nations, in order to deeply understand the teachings of Islam, engaged in research and the exchange of opinions and viewpoints.

4- The final cause was the peaceful coexistence with people who were non Muslims, particularly the 'People of the Book'. The Muslims believed in tolerance and coexistence with the 'People of the Book' and they did not consider this as running counter to their religious teachings. During that time, the People of the Book were a relatively scholarly and learned group. As a result, the Muslims would have dialogue with them and this in turn

would bring about debate, discussion, and reflection.[201]

The Meeting of Various Religions and Sects

The time of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) was a time for the meeting of different ideas and the appearance of various sects and religions. Due to the encounter of the Muslims with the differing ideologies and opinions of the People of the Book, as well as the Greek scholars, various doubts and problems began to manifest within the society. During this time, various sects such as the Muʿtazilah, the Jabrīyah, Murjiʿah, Ghullāt,[202] Zanādiqah,[203] Mushabbih, Maṭsūfah, Mujasimah, Tanāsakhīyah, as well as others appeared, with each one propagating their own specific ideology.

Moreover, in the fields of each of the Islamic sciences, various different opinions began to emerge. For example, in fields such as the science of the recitation of the Quran, commentary, traditions, jurisprudence, and theology, there were varying discussions and heated debates. Each person would present their own opinion in support of their respective ideology.

The Great Jaʿfarī University

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa), in light of the great opportunity which ha come about due to the political situation, and in view of th great public need and the social readiness for such a movement, continued the great tradition of knowledge of his father, Imam Bāqir (ʿa). He created a large university and trained students in the various fields of intellectual and narrative sciences. Some of his students included: Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Muḥammad ibn Mūslim, Abān ibn Taghlab, Hishām ibn Sālim, Mu'min Ṭāq, Mufaḍal ibn ʿUmar, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, as well as many others.

---

[201] Shahīd Muṭaharī, Murtaḍā, Sayrī Dar Sīreye A'īmma' Aṭḥār (ʿa), First Print, Qum, Ṣadrā Publications, 1367 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 142-160.

[202] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbiʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 113-126.

[203] The Zanādiqah were deniers of God and religion. They also happened to have knowledge of the sciences and languages of their time.

His students were numbered at 4,000 strong.[204]

Each of these students was counted as a prominent intellectual personality who did great services in the pursuit of knowledge and learning. A group of them compiled intellectual works and had their own students. As an example, Hishām ibn Ḥakam wrote 31 books[205], and Jābir ibn Ḥayyān wrote over 200[206] books in various fields including rational and natural subjects, as well as in chemistry, which was known as alchemy during that time. For this same reason, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān is famously known today as the father of chemistry. Jābir's books were also translated into various European languages during the Middle Ages, and the historians of science all mention him with respect and admiration.

Mufaḍal's Treatise on the Oneness of God

As we mentioned previously, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) raised certain discussions in the natural sciences and brought forward a number of facts which are still the subject of amazement by modern day scientists. A clear example of this is Mufaḍal's treatise on the oneness of God (Tawhīd) which Imam Ṣādiq ('a) dictated over a period of four days. This treatise was written down by Mufaḍal ibn 'Umar Kūfī and so it famously became known as 'Mufaḍal's Tawhīd'.

In the introduction of the treatise, Mufaḍal has said: "One day during the evening, I was sitting in the Prophet's mosque contemplating on the greatness of the Prophet (ṣ) and on the nobility and virtue... which God had bestowed upon him. I was immersed in these thoughts when suddenly Ibn Abī al-'Awjā', who was one of the atheists of that time, entered and sat down

---

[204] Shaykh Mufīd, Al-'Irshād, Qum, Maktabah Baṣīratī, p. 271.
- Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbi'ah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 69.

[205] Ṣafā'ī, Sayyid Aḥmad, Hishām ibn Ḥakam Madāfi' Ḥarīm Wilāyat, Tehran, Āfāq Publications, Second Edition, 1359 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 19.
- Fattāl Nayshābūrī, Rawḍat al-Wā'iẓīn, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-'Alamī Lil Maṭbū'āt, 1406 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 229.

[206] Ibn Nadīm, in the book al-Fihrīst, has attributed over 220 volumes to Jābir. (Al-Fihrīst, Cairo, al-Maktabah Tijārīyat al-Kubrā, p. 512-517.

within hearing distance.

After this, one of his friends also entered and sat close to him. They began to speak of some matters in regards to the Prophet (ṣ)... Then ibn Abī al-ʿAwjā said: 'You must stop speaking of Muḥammad, for my mind is confused about him... You must speak about the principles which he brought forth.' At this point, they began to speak about the creator of the universe until their words reached the conclusion that there was no creator or manager in the world of existence, and that everything had simply come into existence by itself. They further said that it had always been like this and would always remain as such."

Mufaḍal then says: "When I heard these words from this... individual, I could not hold back my anger and said: 'Oh enemy of God, you have become an atheist and you have denied the Creator who created you in the best form, and has taken you through various stages and carried you to this final position. If you reflect within yourself and refer to your own mind, you will surely discover the signs of your creator within yourself and you will see that the evidence of the existence of God and his power, and the indications of his knowledge and wisdom are manifest and clear within you.'

Ibn Abī al-ʿAwjā said: 'Oh man, if you are of the theologians, then I will speak to you in their method— if you defeat us, then we will follow you. If you are not of them, then discussing this matter will have no benefit. And if you are of the companions of Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad Ṣādiq, then he himself never speaks to us in this manner and he does not debate with us like this. He has heard much worse than you have heard, and with greater frequency, yet he has never slandered us. In the debates between him and us, he has never left the limits of courtesy. He is calm, patient, dignified, wise, and he never allows himself to become angry. He listens to our words and arguments until we have said everything possible and we think that we have defeated him, when suddenly, with a few words, he refutes our arguments and reasoning, and with the least amount of words, he completes his argument over us

in such a manner where we cannot answer or respond at all. Therefore, if you are of his followers, speak to us in a way that is worthy of him.'"

Mufaḍal then narrates: "I left the mosque in a state of distress thinking about how Islam and the Muslims were afflicted by the disbelief of these atheists and their rejection of the Creator. While I was in such a state, I suddenly saw my master, Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa)." The Imam (ʿa) saw that I was in a distressed state and so he asked me: "What has happened?"

I repeated the words of the atheists to the Imam (ʿa) and the Imam (ʿa) said: "I will describe for you the wisdom of the Creator in his creation of the world... in such a way that the lesson takers will take lesson from it and it will give increase to the insight of the pious believers, and the atheists and disbelievers will remain bewildered within it. Come to us tomorrow morning...."

After this meeting, Mufaḍal visited the Imam (ʿa) for four consecutive days. Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) spoke about the creation of human beings from the beginning of the creation, their internal and external faculties, their instinctive (fitrī) characteristics, and the creation of the body parts and limbs. He detailed the creation of various animals, as well as the heavens and the earth... and the philosophy behind calamities, in addition to other issues. Mufaḍal wrote all of these down in great detail. This work from Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) is available to this very day for us to benefit from.

The Breadth of Imam Ṣādiq's University

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) played a key role in confronting the intellectual and ideological issues of his time. He manifested the strength of the Shia position and showed the superiority of the Islamic worldview over all others. The students who studied under Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) were not limited to only those of the Shia faith— followers of the Ahl al-Sunnah were also among those who enjoyed the fruits of his knowledge. Famous Sunni leaders, either directly or through intermediaries, are

considered as well known students of the Imam (ʿa).

At the head of these famous leaders was Abū Ḥanīfah, who was a student of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) for a period of two years. Abū Ḥanīfah later called these two years as the corner stone of his knowledge and learning, and is famously known to have said: "If it were not for those two years, Nuʿmān would have been ruined."[207] The students of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) came from various corners of the Islamic world, including: Kūfah, Baṣrah, Wāsiṭ, Ḥijāz, and elsewhere. They also included individuals from various tribes such as the: Banī Asad, Makhāriq, Ṭayy, Salīm, Ghaṭfān, Azd, Khūzāʿah, Khathʿam, Makhzūm, Banī Ḍabbah, and the Quraysh (in particular the Banī Ḥārith ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and the Banī al-Ḥasan).[208]

It is sufficient to mention that in terms of the breadth of the Imam's school, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Zīyād Washāʿa', who was one of the students of Imam Riḍā (ʿa) and one of the famous narrators of tradition of his time, has narrated that: "I witnessed 900 individual teachers of tradition in the Mosque of Kūfah who were all narrating traditions from Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad."[209]

According to Ibn Ḥajar ʿAsqalānī, jurisprudents an narrators of tradition such as: Shuʿbah, Sufyān Thawrī, Sufyā ibn ʿUynah, Mālik, Ibn Jarīḥ, Abū Ḥanīfah, Pasrawī Mūsā, Wahīb ibn Khālid, Qaṭān, Abū ʿĀsim, and others were among the individuals who narrated traditions from the Imam (ʿa).[210] Yāfiʿī has written: "He has many exquisite sermons on the knowledge of the oneness of God, as well as in other fields. His student, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, has composed a book containing 1,000 pages, which contains 500 treatises."[211]

---

[207] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbiʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 70. The name of Abū Ḥanīfah was Nuʿmān ibn Thābit.

[208] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbiʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 38.

[209] Najjāshī, Fihrīst Asmā' Muṣanfī al-Shīʿah, researched by: Sayyid Mūsā Shabīrī Zanjānī, Qum, The Islamic Publications Office affliated with Jamiʿah Mudarisīn, p. 39 and 40.

[210] Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, First Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Fikr, 1404 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 88.

[211] Mirāt al-Jinān, Second Edition, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-ʿAlamī, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2,

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) would encourage and teach each of his individual students according to whichever field they had a natural talent and passion for. As a result, each one of them would specialize in one or two of the sciences- these included: traditions, Quranic commentary, the science of theology, as well as many others. Sometimes, when scholars would come to the Imam (ʿa) in order to debate him, he would direct them towards one of his students, who had specialized in that particular field.

Hishām ibn Salīm has narrated: "One day we were sitting in the presence of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) with a group of the Imam's (ʿa) companions. A Syrian man asked for permission to enter, and after gaining permission, entered the gathering. The Imam (ʿa) said: 'Have a seat.' Then he asked: 'What do you need?' The Syrian man said: 'I have heard that you give answers to all of the people's questions and problems; I have come to debate with you.' The Imam (ʿa) asked: 'In which subject?' The Syrian man replied: 'On the manner of the recitation of the Quran.' The Imam (ʿa) faced Ḥamrān and said: 'Ḥamrān, the answer of this man lies with you.' The Syrian man replied: 'I want to debate with you, not with Ḥamrān.' The Imam (ʿa) replied: 'If you defeat Ḥamrān, then you have defeated me.'

The Syrian man began to debate with Ḥamrān hesitantly. Whatever the Syrian man would ask, he would receive a decisive and well reasoned answer from Ḥamrān, and this reached the point where he became helpless in continuing the debate and the signs of frustration and anger became apparent on his face. The Imam said: 'How did you find Ḥamrān?' The man replied: 'In truth, Ḥamrān is very skilled; whatever I ask him, he gives me the appropriate answer.' The Syrian man continued and said: 'I want to debate on the lexical sciences and Arabic grammar with you.' The Imam (ʿa) looked at Abān ibn Taghlab and said: 'Debate with him.' Abān debated with the man in a very skilled way and soundly defeated him. The Syrian man said: 'I want to debate with you on the subject of religious

---

p. 304.

rulings.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) looked at Zurārah and said: 'Debate with him.' Zurārah engaged in debate with the Syrian man and quickly defeated him.

The Syrian then said: 'I want to debate with you on scholastic theology.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) directed Mu'mīn Ṭāq to engage in debate with him. It was not long before the Syrian was defeated by Mu'mīn Ṭāq. In this same manner, when the Syrian asked to debate in the fields of Istiṭā'ah (the ability of human beings in committing or not committing good and evil), Tawhīd (the oneness of God), and the imamate, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) directed Ḥamzah Ṭayyār, Hishām ibn Sālim, and Hishām ibn Ḥakam to debate with him. All three defeated him by putting forward decisive arguments and reasoning. When Imam Ṣādiq ('a) witnessed this scene, a smile played on his lips out of happiness at the knowledge of his students."[212]

The Debates of Imam Ṣādiq

As mentioned previously, the time of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was a time of the meeting of different ideas and ideologies, as well as the coming about of various sects and faiths. Due to the interaction of these varying creeds and ideologies with Islam, certain doubts and problems arose. In order to introduce Islam and the ideology of the Shia school of thought, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) engaged in many debates with the leaders and heads of various schools of thought. In these debates, he proved through the use of sound logic and reasoning that their ideologies were without foundation.

As an example from among the many debates of Imam Ṣādiq ('a), we will present his debate with Abū Ḥanīfah, the leader of the Sunni Ḥanafī sect. It has been narrated that: "One day Abū Ḥanīfah went to the house of the Imam ('a), and asked for permission to meet with him. The Imam ('a) did not give him permission. Abū Ḥanīfah then says: 'I waited for a period

---

[212] Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl (Popularly known as Rijāl Kashshī), researched by: Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, 1348 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 275-278.
- Tastarī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Tehran, The Center for Book Publications, vol. 3, p. 416.

of time near the door, until a group of Kūfans arrived and asked for permission to enter.'

The Imam ('a) gave them permission. I also entered the house discreetly alongside them, and when we came to the Imam ('a), I said: 'It would be opportune that you send a representative to Kūfah and prohibit the people there from speaking abusively about the companions of Muḥammad. There are more than 10,000 people in that city who abuse the companions of the Prophet.' The Imam ('a) replied: 'The people will not accept that from me (meaning they will not listen to me).' Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'How is it possible that they will not listen to your words, while you are the descendent of the Prophet of God (ṣ).' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) replied: 'You yourself are of those who do not listen to me. Did you not enter the house without my permission, and did you not sit down without my permission, and did you not (then) begin to speak without my permission?'

Then Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: 'I have heard that you give religious rulings based on qīyās (deductive analogy)?' Abū Ḥanīfah replied: 'Yes this is correct.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: 'Woe upon you, for the first individual who gave an opinion on this basis was Satan. When God ordered him to prostrate before Adam, he said: "I will not prostrate, for you have created me from fire and (created him) from dirt, and fire is superior to dirt."' Then the Imam ('a) mentioned some Islamic issues which are contrary to the matter of qīyās. He ('a) asked: 'In your opinion, is the unlawful killing of an individual worse or fornication?'

Abū Ḥanīfah answered: 'The unlawful killing of an individual is worse.' The Imam ('a) said: '(If acting upon qīyās is correct) then why is it that for the proving of murder, two witnesses are sufficient, while for the proving of fornication four are necessary? Is this ruling of Islam in concordance with qīyās?' Abū Ḥanīfah replied: 'No.' Again, the Imam ('a) asked: 'Is urine more unclean or semen?' Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'Urine.' The Imam ('a) replied: 'Then why has God ordered people to do the ritual ablution (wudhū), while for the second (impurity)

he has ordered them to do the ritual bath (ghusl)? Is this ruling in concordance with qīyās?' Again, Abū Ḥanīfah replied: 'No.'

Then Imam Ṣādiq ('a) asked: 'Is prayer more important or fasting?' Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'Prayer is more important.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: 'Then why is the compensatory fast of a 'Ḥā'iḍ' woman obligatory, but the make up of her prayers is not? Is this ruling in concordance with qīyās?' Abū Ḥanīfah again replied in the negative. The Imam ('a) asked: 'Is a woman weaker or a man?' Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'A woman.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: 'Then why is the inheritance of a man twice that of the inheritance of a woman? Is this ruling in concordance with qīyās?' Again, Abū Ḥanīfah replied in the negative.

Then Imam Ṣādiq ('a) asked: 'I have heard that you interpret this verse "Then you shall be questioned that day about the joy you indulged in"[213] to mean that: 'God will call to account the people on the delicious food and cold water that they have drank in the summers.' Abū Ḥanīfah replied: 'That is correct- I have interpreted this verse in this manner.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said: 'What would you say about a person who invites you to their home and hosts you with delicious food and cold water, and then afterwards, places an obligation on you due to his invitation?' Abū Ḥanīfah said: 'I would say he is a miserly individual.' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) then said: 'Is God miserly (in that he would call us to account for the food that he has given us)?' Abū Ḥanīfah then asked: 'Then what is the meaning of these blessings which the Quran says human beings will be called to account for?' Imam Ṣādiq ('a) replied: 'The meaning is the blessing of our friendship, the family of the prophetic message.'"[214]

Explaining Religious Precepts from the Shia Viewpoint

In the matter of the establishment of Imam Ṣādiq's ('a) university, one matter that oftentimes remains concealed from

---

[213] Surah Takāthur, Verse 8

[214] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, vol. 10, p. 22.
- Muḥammad Ray Shahrī, Muḥammad, Debates About Ideological Issues, Qum, Dār al-Fikr Publications, p. 130-132.

his biographers and researchers is the political aspect of his school. Before delving into this matter, we must address certain issues first:

To begin with, the system of government in Islam is different from all other systems in one respect, and this is the fact that the government is not solely a political entity; it is the synthesis of a political and religious system unified into one cohesive whole. The designation of the term caliph for the Islamic ruler is an indication of this reality, where he is more than a simple political figurehead— he is in reality the successor to the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) and his divinely inspired religion.

Therefore, the position of a ruler in Islam is more than merely a position of state power and authority. An Islamic ruler is the people's guardian in both religious and wordly matters. This indisputable fact showed itself when later Islamic rulers (who did not have the proper religious qualifications, or sometimes had no religious qualifications at all) took scholars into their courts in order to alleviate their weaknesses in this matter.

These court scholars were used to give religious rulings in ccordance to the despotic ruler's whims and wishes; the ommon people in the society were not capable of knowing the difference between authentic rulings and fabrications. Therefore, religious rulings could be created on the basis of the "greater good" of the time, and they would override traditional religious principles established by the Prophet (ṣ). Writers and historians of previous centuries have mentioned many terrible examples and consequences of the fabrication of traditions and the interpretation of Islam based on people's personal opinions. Naturally, these acts were most oftentimes instigated at the behest of the political powers of the time.

The interpretation of the Quran based on personal opinion was another problem which would manifest itself at times— the Quran was interpreted based on a scholar's personal opinion, and this self-serving interpretation could easily twist the rulings of God in the minds of the people and incline them towards whatever the scholar wished (which was almost always in

concordance with the desires of the ruler of the time).

From the earliest times in Islamic history, religious rulings, traditions, and commentary flowed into two different and distinct directions. The first path was affiliated with the official (and usually oppressive) system of government, which would sacrifice the truth for political expediency and power. In this case, the laws of God were twisted and perverted in the quest for power and wealth. The second path was the pure path, which did not consider any expediency higher than divine expediency, and which was by nature opposed to the first system. Oftentimes, this second path found itself as the unofficial and unauthorized form of Islam.

The Imam's Stance against Deviation

It is clear that 'Ja'farī jurisprudence', as opposed to the official jurisprudence of the government, was not simply the manifestation of a religious difference of opinion; it possessed two intrinsically critical elements. The first and most important of the two, was the assertion that the government lacked any religious awareness and was unable to manage th intellectual affairs of the society. In other words, tl government completely lacked the competance necessary fo being entrusted with the office of the caliphate.

The second was showcasing the various distortions which had been created in the official version of the religion. These distortions were the result of governmental scholars bending reality to suit the desires the governing powers. Through the propagation of knowledge in a manner wholly different from the government scholars, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) positioned himself in opposition to the prevailing system. Through these means, the Imam ('a) showed the inherent faults in the government version of the religion and in this way, he stripped the government of its authority which it derived from its façade of religiosity.

In the discussions and teachings of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) to his companions, the topic of the 'lack of knowledge of the caliphs

in the religious sciences[3] was mentioned as one of the reasons why these rulers did not have the right to rule over the Muslim nation. Therefore, the criticism of the Imams ('a) was not always indirect in nature; they were oftentimes direct attacks as well. For example, the following tradition is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq ('a) where he said: "We are a group whose obedience God has made obligatory, while you are a people who follow an individual whose ignorance will not be a legitimate excuse in front of God."

This means that the people who became deviated from the true path of God due to the ignorance of their rulers and governors, cannot use that as an excuse in the presence of God. They cannot say to God: "We followed our rulers and we became deviated in our religious beliefs and practices because of them." Following such leaders is itself a sin, and it cannot excuse the other sins that will naturally follow.[215]

Examples of the Imam's Students

As mentioned before, the number of students educated at he Imam's university was approximately four thousand in number. To avoid taking too much time, let us suffice by introducing just one of these students who studied under the Imam ('a):

The Genius of Hishām ibn Ḥakam

Hishām was a prominent scholar and famous theologian who possessed expressive eloquence and extraordinary skills in the art of debate. He was one of the greatest students of the school of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) and Imam Kāẓim ('a). Hishām tirelessly served the cause of Shiaism during a time when they were under great pressure politically from both the ruling powers, as well as various sects and schools of thought. He defended the belief of the imamate, which is one of the foundational beliefs of the Shia, and explained the role of the

[215] (Ayatollah) Khāminiī, Sayyid 'Alī, Pīshvāye Ṣādiq, Tehran, Sayyid Jamāl Publications, p. 87-91.

Imam as the leader of the society.

Hishām's intellectual and ideological foundations were formed and strengthened in Imam Ṣādiq's ('a) school. After 148 Hijrī, with the martyrdom of Imam Ṣādiq ('a), his intellectual powers continued to grow and blossom under the guidance of Imam Kāẓim ('a).

In Pursuit of the Truth

A look into the life of Hishām shows that he was a man captivated with a love for knowledge, and who was thirsty for the truth. In order to quench his thirst for knowledge and science, Hishām first began his intellectual career by learning the common subjects of his time; he soon found that he had mastered these. Then, in order to further his knowledge, he began readings the books of Greek philosophy. He eventually gained such an expertise in this subject that he even wrote a book refuting some of the ideas of Aristotle.

Then, in pursuit of even more knowledge, he began to research the beliefs and ideas of various sects. After muc searching, none of the ideas of these sects appealed to him ve much. In time, he grew disillusioned and pulled away fron these groups completely. Later on, he became aware of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) through his uncle. From that time onwards, the course of his life changed completely, as he embraced the teachings of the Shia school of thought.

Some scholars have narrated that: "Hishām ibn Ḥakam began his intellectual career as the student of Abū Shākir Dīṣānī, a famous atheist and materialist. He then entered the Jahmīyah sect and became one of the followers of Jahm ibn Ṣafwān, a Jabrī, who believe in predestination. Some have considered these two things as points of weakness for Hishām, and have accused him of holding a deviant ideology."[216] This is while firstly, Hishām was never a student of Abū Shakir and on the contrary, he held debates with him, causing Abū Shakir to

[216] For the history of Hishām's life, refer to: Na'mah, 'Abdullah, Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Second Edition, Lebanon, Dār al-Fikr, p. 39-53.

become a Muslim.[217] Also, even if we were to suppose that this was true, and that he was involved in the debates and gatherings of various sects, this does not mean that he accepted their point of view. The contacts which he had with these different groups could have simply been for the purpose of debate and of gaining knowledge of their beliefs.

Secondly, for an individual who is after the truth and who wishes to truly recognize the truth with full understanding, this point cannot be counted as one of weakness.[218] Searching for the truth, even if one stumbles at first, is actually a point of strength. In addition, Hishām continued to propagate Shia Islam until the end of his life and he has left behind a brilliant record of his achievements and fulfilments.

A Time for the Meeting of Different Ideas

As mentioned in previous pages, the second century Hijrī was a period of intellectual growth and achievement. It was a time of learning, research, and the clash of different ideas. In addition to this, it was a time when many schools of thought were formed. Even though Islam was a religion that promoted learning and knowledge from its very inception, this particular century was particularly known for its high level of intellectual growth and developement. The reasons behind this increase was that, on the one hand, the Muslim scholars were exposed to the ideas of Greek philosophy. On the other hand, they also began to be introduced to ideas held by non Muslim scholars from different nations. From another perspective, due to the formation of various sects inside the Muslim society, there was a great increase in the fervor of debates, discussions, and gatherings which were taking place. A great multitude of scholars had risen in various fields and there were many academic heavyweights in each field.

---

[217] Tastarī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Tehran, The Center for Book Publications, vol. 9, p. 351.

[218] Ṣafā'ī, Sayyid Aḥmad, Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Madāfi' Ḥarīm Wīlāyat, Second Edition, Tehran, Āfāq Publications, Second Edition 1359 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 14.

- Māmaqānī, 'Abdullah, Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl, Tehran, World Publications, vol. 3, p. 301.

Moreover, since many of the intellectual and scientific fields were still in their infancy and had not taken on a concrete form yet, the field for discussion and debate was quite vast.[219] Due to these causes, discussions and debates between various sects and religions took on a special importance and many of these have been recorded in the books of history and are with us today. The sum total of these factors caused a blossoming of the intellectual sciences, and increased awareness among the Muslims in such a manner that the books of history have treated this time period in a special fashion.

Hishām ibn Ḥakam was born and nurtured in this period and since he possessed a strong intellect and enthusiasm towards gaining knowledge, he quickly joined the ranks of the scholars and became known as one of the foremost intellectuals of his time.[220]

The First Meeting

Although Hishām had spent much time in his earlier days researching various sects and schools of thought, he was still left unsatisfied and he felt that nothing he had come across wa what he was searching for. He continued to debate and hol discussions with many of the famous scholars of his time an there was only one individual left whom Hishām had not yet met. This individual was none other than Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad (ʿa), the sixth Imam of the Shias.

Hishām believed that in meeting with Imam Jaʿfar Ṣādiq (ʿa), some new doors would be opened to him, and so he had his uncle, who was a Shia, set up a meeting with the Imam (ʿa). The story of this first meeting is quite interesting and worthy of mentioning here. Hishām's uncle, ʿUmar ibn Yazīd, is quoted as saying: "My nephew Hishām, who was one of the followers of the Jahmīyah sect, asked me to take him to Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) in order that he could discuss religious issues with

---

[219] Amīn, Aḥmad, Ḍaḥya al-Islām, Seventh Edition, Cairo, Maktabah Nihḍat al-Miṣrīyah, vol. 2, p. 54.

[220] Ṣafā'ī, Sayyid Aḥmad, Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Madafī Ḥarīm Wīlāyat, Second Edition, Tehran, Âfāq Publications, 1359 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 14.

of thought, and he quickly traversed through its highest stages of learning. He then began to teach others the essentials of the faith and defend it against its enemies. In doing so, he left behind many great intellectual works. When we look at the list of his works (which equal thirty or so volumes in number), we begin to slightly grasp his intellectual greatness and the vast depths of his knowledge. The list is as follows:

1- The book of the Imamate.
2- The causes behind the taking place of things.
3- A refutation of the Atheists.
4- A refutation of the Thanawīyah (Dualists).
5- The book of Tawhīd (the oneness of God).
6- A refutation of Hishām Jawālīqī.
7- A refutation of the Materialists.
8- The old and the young.
9- Pondering on Tawhīd (the oneness of God).[223]
10- The Measure.
11- The Field.
12- A refutation for those who believe in the Imamate of the lesser individual.[224]
13- The dispute of the people in the issue of the Imamate.
14- Testaments (wills) and a refutation of those who disbelieve in them.
15- Free will and predestination.
16- Ḥakamayn.
17- A refutation of the Mu'tazilah's beliefs on Ṭalḥah and Zubayr.
18- Qadar
19- Words
20- Understanding
21- Ability
22- The eight doors
23- A refutation of the Shayṭān Ṭāriq.

---

[223] This book was compiled by one of Hishām's students by the name of 'Alī ibn Manṣūr.

[224] The meaning of Mafḍūl is when there is someone more virtuous and capable than someone else.

24- What is the cause behind the introduction of traditions?
25- A refutation of Aristotle in Tawhīd.
26- A refutation of the beliefs of the Mu'tazilah.
27- Sessions on the Imamate.[225]
28- 'Ilal Taḥrīm.
29- Farā'īḍ (Inheritance).[226]

The Imam's Political Activities

Here it is important to mention that Imam Ṣādiq's ('a) intellectual activities, while vast in their breadth and scope, did not comprise his only legacy. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was also engaged in various political activities, and unfortunately, this aspect of his life has remained concealed from many historians and writers.

In order to displace this false image of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) as not being involved in politics and simply going along with the policies of the rulers of his time, we will bring forward some examples of his political activities.

The Dispatch of Representatives in the Propagation of th Concept of the Imamate

One of the political activities of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was the dispatching of representatives into various areas of the Muslim world for the purpose of propagating the concept of the imamate. For example, an individual was sent from the people of Kūfah to Khurāsān, where he began inviting people to the leadership (Wīlāyah) of Imam Ṣādiq ('a). One group accepted this invitation and obeyed, while another group rejected it. A third group refrained from giving an answer out of caution and a fear of causing problems in the society.

One individual was selected from each of these three groups in order to meet with the Imam ('a). During the journey to meet the Imam ('a), the representative from the third group did an

---

[225] Shaykh Ṭūsī, al-Fihrīst, Mashhad, Dānishkadeye Ilahīyāt wa Ma'ārif Islāmī, p. 355.
- Najjāshī, Fihrīst Asmā' Muṣanfī al-Shī'ah, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 304.
[226] Najjāshī, Fihrīst Asmā' Muṣanfī al-Shī'ah, Qum, Maktabah al-Dāwarī, p. 304.

inappropriate act with the servant of one of his fellow travelers, but no one realized what had taken place. When these individuals arrived and met with the Imam (ʿa), this representative began to speak first, saying: "An individual from the people of Kūfah came to our area and began inviting the people towards your obedience and Wīlāyah; one group accepted, another group rejected, and the third group refrained out of caution."

The Imam (ʿa) asked: "Which group are you from?" The man replied: "I am from those who have practiced caution." The Imam (ʿa) said: "Since you are of the people of caution and abstinence, then why did not show caution on that specific night, when you engaged in that treacherous act?"[227]

This is one example of how the Imam (ʿa) would work to increase the people's knowledge of the imamate. In reality, this was a politically inspired action because it was negating the authority of the government of that time....

The Factors behind the Downfall of the Umayyids

One of the interesting points in regards to the life of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) is that the deterioration and ultimate collapse of the Umayyid government took place during his era. When we examine the Umayyid government, we find that one of their most glaring characteristics were the many religious deviations which they had caused in the Muslim community. Over time, this had caused the people to rise up in defiance and open rebellion against them. The reasons behind the anger of the people can be summarized into the following few points:

1- From the time of Mūʿāwīya onwards, the Islamic government had been transformed into a despotic and hereditary monarchy.

2- The public treasury was primarily used for the luxury-filled lifestyles of the rulers and their cronies; very little of it was used for the benefit of the public.

---

[227] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Second Edition, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 47, p. 72.

3- The normalization of arrest, imprisonment, torture, murder, and, at times, the wholesale slaughter of the people.
4- Another issue was that during the time of the Umayyids, the caliphs had no hesitation in creating religious rulings which were openly against the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (ṣ). For example, in open contradiction with the explicit ruling of the Prophet (ṣ), Mū'āwīya illegitimately named Zīyād as the son of Abū Sufyān which made him his brother.
5- The religion of Islam contains rules and injunctions for the punishment of criminal offenders. These set of rules are known as 'Ḥudūd and Dīyāt'. While criminal offenders are to be punished strictly according to the guidelines and limits set by the 'Ḥudūd and Dīyāt', this was changed during the time of the Umayyids. Arrested individuals would at times be set free, while others who were innocent were executed. In other situations, people would be punished far in excess of what their offenses called for.
6- Although famous scholars were educated in the Islamic school system, much of the time, people did not pay any real attention to what they said. Moreover, if a scholar exercised religious ruling which was to the detriment of a ruler, he woul be persecuted and possibly even killed as a result. In this wa the commanding of good and the forbidding of evil were suspended in the society, even though these were two of the fundamental pillars of Islam.
7- The rites and rituals of Islam were insulted openly. Even the Kaaba and the Masjid al-Ḥarām were destroyed at certain times in history. The grave of the Prophet (ṣ), alongside his mosque and pulpit, were dishonored. The people of Medina were subject to wholesale slaughter for a period of three days during the Massacre of Ḥurreh.
8- For the first time in the history of Islam, the descendants of the Prophet were collectively killed, and their wives and daughters taken as captives and paraded around in various cities.
9- A form of praise through poetry existed which was a common practice during the 'Age of Ignorance'. This type of

poetry had been prohibited during the time of the Prophet (ṣ) and the early days of Islam. Later on, with the rise of the Ummayids, it was made a common custom once again.

10- A group of scholars, who were primarily after worldly gain and who were willing to sell their religion for the sake of it, began to ascend in social status and position. With their actions, they bought the pleasure of their rulers while gaining the displeasure of their Creator. This group of individuals interpreted the verses of the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (ṣ) as they desired, and in this way, they gave legitimacy to the actions of their corrupt leaders.

11- There was an increasing trend towards opulence and luxury in matters of lifestyle, food, clothing, buildings, and everyday household items. Magnificent palaces were built as the houses of government. There were even palaces built on the hunting grounds of the rulers.

12- Wine drinking, womanizing, and the buying of singing slaves became customary. For certain caliphs, the daily subject of their speech turned wholly to women, food, and wine. This was the only thing which they were concerned about.[228]

13- The concept of the equality of the people of different races was always an important foundation of the Islamic system. The Ummayids eliminated this system and replaced it with a racist and aggressive ideology of Arab supremacy. This policy benefited the Arabs, while being to the detriment of all non Arabs. This was while the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ṣ) had abrogated all notions of racial superiority in the eyes of God.

The only thing that mattered in Islam was the piety and sincerity which a person lived by. In spite of this, the Umayyids counted the Arabs as being a superior race, and proclaimed that: "Since the Prophet of Islam was from the Arabs, therefore the Arabs are superior to all other races, and amongst the Arabs, the Quraysh are the most superior." Based on this policy, Arabs

---

[228] Doctor Shahīdī, Sayyid Ja'far, The Analytical History of Islam Up to the Downfall of the Umayyid Government, Sixth Print, Tehran, The Center For University Publications, 1365 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 204.

were preferred over non Arabs in all positions of rank and authority. The Umayyid imperial system of government considered the 'Mawālī' (Muslims of non Arab stock) as being like servants or slaves, and deprived them of all rights and social positions of authority; the word Mawālī was made synonymous with a very low social position.

In regards to work, the Mawālī were deprived of working in any of the respectable professions. They did not have the right to make weapons, ride on horses, or to marry Arab women. Even desert dwelling Arabs (Bedouins) who were considered to be of low rank in society were forbidden to them in marriage. If someone secretly married an Arab woman, the woman would be forcibly divorced from him and the man would be punished by a vicious lashing. All the positions of government and leadership were reserved exclusively for the Arabs and no non Arab could ever secure such positions. In essence, the Arab Umayyids believed that their race was created to rule over others and that hard work and struggle were reserved for the Mawālī. Their attitude in this matter was one of the bigges contributors to their fall by the hands of the Iranians. In tl revolution against the Umayyids, the 'Abbāsids used the issues in mobilizing mass support against them.

While all of these factors played a role, there were two factors which had the greatest effect: the subjugation of the Mawālī, and the oppression against the family of the Prophet. The 'Abbāsids gained much political ground because of these two matters and in reality, these two issues can be considered as the primary tools which allowed them to gain supremacy in their struggle for power against the Ummayids.

Why Did Imam Ṣādiq Reject the 'Abbāsid Revolutionaries?

Another interesting issue in the life of Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was his rejection of an oath of allegiance from the heads of the 'Abbāsid movement. If we look at the 'Abbāsid revolution with a superficial view, we would see that religious inclinations seemed to have had a strong part in forming and sustaining the

movement. For example, the slogans were all religious in nature, the words that were on the flags were all verses of the Quran, and the leaders were claiming to be working for the benefit of the family of the Prophet. The apparent goal of the 'Abbāsids was retribution from the Umayyids and the Marwānids for the blood that had been spilt from the family of the Prophet. They also attempted to connect their revolution with the family of the Prophet as well. In the beginning of the Abbasid revolution, it was not clear who the leader of the movement was going to be, but their slogan was the following: "We have revolted in order to pledge allegiance with the chosen one from the family of Muḥammad."

It is said that Abū Mūslim had many companions and helpers from among the Arabs as well. During the time of pledging allegiance to Abū Mūslim, they swore that they would remain firm in following the Book of God, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and in obeying a yet unknown, but selected individual from amongst the family of the Prophet. They swore that they would not show delay in following this individual, and that they would obey his commands without question.

They even swore an oath that when they were victorious, they would not engage in killing the enemy except under the rules of Islam and their commanders. The standard under which they were recognized consisted of black clothing and black flags. They had chosen this color possibly because the flag of the Prophet was reputed to have been this same color and their intention in the revolt was to return to the pure essence of the religion of the Prophet.

Another reason for this color may have been as a sign of their mourning and sorrow over what had been done to the family of the Prophet. They may have also thought of themselves as the living examples of the news of 'Malāḥim,' which spoke of black flags in Khurāsān as the sign of the downfall of an oppressive and tyrannical government, and the

establishment of a just one.[229] [230] In any case, the superficial view of the situation showed that the revolt of the ʿAbbāsids was an immense movement containing many Islamic elements.

Letters from the Leaders of the Movement to Imam Ṣādiq

At one point during the Abbasid struggle, Abū Mūslim wrote the following to the Imam (ʿa): "I am inviting the people to the friendship of the family of the Prophet; if you are so inclined, there is no one better for the caliphate than you." The Imam (ʿa) wrote him that: "Neither are you of my companions, nor is this time, my time."[231] Faḍl Kātib also narrates that: "One day I was with Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) when a letter arrived from Abū Mūslim. The Imam (ʿa) told the messenger: 'Your letter is not answerable, so leave our midst.'"[232]

Abū Salmah' Khallāl, who later was introduced as the "Vizier of the family of Muḥammad," saw himself situated in a position which he felt was to his detriment; in order to change these circumstances, he decided to leave the people he was with, and attach himself to the children of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa). Therefore, he wrote letters to three of the well-known Alawīs: Imam Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (ʿa), ʿAbdullah ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥasaı ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (ʿAbdullah Maḥḍ), and ʿUmar al-Ashra. ibn Zayn al-ʿAbidīn (ʿa). After he had written the letters, he

---

[229] In regards to the black flags and clothing, please refer to the following sources: Zarīn Kūb, ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn, Two Centuries of Silence (Do Qarne Sukūt), Seventh Edition, Tehran, The Everlasting Publications Organization, p. 116.

- Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 479.
- Khaṭīb Baghdādī, The History of Baghdad, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, vol. 10, p. 208.
- Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, First Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Maʿārif, 1966 A.D., vol. 10, p. 67.

[230] In regards to the signs of the 'Reappearance', one of them involves the coming of black flags from the east; this is a sign of the coming of a just government. Refer to: Biḥār al-'Anwār, vol. 52, p. 217-229 (The Section on the Signs of the Reappearance) Irshād Mufīd, p. 357.

[231] Shahrīstānī, al-Milal wa al-Niḥal, researched by: Muḥammad Sayyid Gīlānī, Beirut, Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1402 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 154.

[232] Kulaynī, al-Rawḍat Min al-Kāfī, Second Edition, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1389 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 274.

- Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 47, p. 297.

entrusted them to one of his friends and told him: "First go to Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq ('a); if he accepts, then destroy the other two letters. If he does not accept, then visit 'Abdullah Maḥḍ, and if he also does not accept, then visit 'Umar."

The messenger first went to Imam Ṣādiq ('a) and turned over his letter. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said to him: "Abū Salmah' is the follower of others; what connection does he have to us?" The messenger said: "Read the letter." Imam Ṣādiq ('a) asked one of his servants to bring the lamp nearer, and when the lamp was brought close, Imam Ṣādiq ('a) put the letter on the fire of the lamp and burned it. The messenger asked: "Will you not give an answer to the letter?" Imam Ṣādiq ('a) replied: "My answer was exactly as you saw."

The messenger then went to 'Abdullah Maḥḍ and gave him the second letter. When 'Abdullah finished reading the letter, he kissed it, and quickly mounted and rode towards Imam Ṣādiq ('a). When he arrived, he said: "This letter arrived just now through one of our followers (Shias) in Khurāsān. It is from Abū Salmah' who has invited me to the position of the caliphate." Imam Ṣādiq ('a) said to 'Abdullah: "Since when have the people of Khurāsān become your followers (Shias)? Do you know even a single individual from amongst them? Since neither you know them, nor do any of them know you, how are they of your followers (Shia)?" 'Abdullah said: "From your speech, it seems that you have an opinion in this matter?"

The Imam ('a) said: "God knows that I consider seeking the best for each and every Muslim as a personal obligation; how can I not, then, consider it in your case? Oh 'Abdullah, seek distance between yourself and these futile aspirations. Know that this government will be of the family of 'Abbās, and that a letter just like this was also sent to me." At this point, 'Abdullah left (the Imam ('a)) in a state of distress. 'Umar ibn Zayn al-'Abidīn also gave Abū Salmah's letter a negative reply. He rejected the letter, saying: "I do not know the sender of this letter so that I can reply to him."[233]

---

[233] Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 154.

When the flags of victory were being raised and the signs of triumph were made manifest, Abū Salmah' wrote a letter to Imam Ṣādiq ('a) for the second time, saying: "Seventy thousand warriors are mobilized under our command, so make your position clear." The Imam ('a) once again repeated his previous answer.[234]

Abū Bakr Haḍramī narrates that he and Abān ibn Taghlib went to Imam Ṣādiq ('a), and this was during the time that the black flags had been raised in Khurāsān. They said: "How do you judge the situation?" Imam Ṣādiq ('a) replied: "Sit in your houses; whenever you see us gathered around a man, then hasten towards us with your weapons (in support)."[235]

In another instance, the Imam ('a) told his companions: "Take care of your tongues and do not come out of your homes, for what is exclusively for you (the true Islamic government) will not arrive this soon...."[236] From what has been mentioned in the previous pages, Imam Ṣādiq's ('a) position, in view of Abū Salmah and Abū Muslim's invitation, may seem difficult to understand at first. In spite of this, with deeper research and understanding, the reasons behind the Imam's ('a) actions reveal themselves quite clearly. Imam Ṣādiq ('a) knew that the leaders of the revolt had no real motivations besides reaching power. Even if they were using slogans claiming the support of the family of the Prophet, this was only to attract the support of the masses, who themselves supported this family ('a).

Historical documents clearly show that after the Khurāsānī troops reached Kūfah, Abū Salmah' Khallāl took the reins of power and began to divide various military and political positions amongst his supporters. He indeed wanted to have an Alawite caliph, but he wanted the decision making powers and main functions of government to be in his own hands. In this

---

- Mas'ūdī, Marwaj al-Dhahab, Beirut, Dār al-'Andalūs, vol. 3, p. 253- 254. Mas'ūdī does not mention the letter of 'Umar ibn Zayn al-'Abidīn.

[234] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 47, p. 133.

[235] Ibid, vol. 52, p. 138.

[236] Ibid, vol. 52, p. 138.

case, the caliphate would have been in reality a ceremonial position for anyone who had taken it.[237] The Imam ('a) knew that Abū Mūslim and Abū Salmah' were only after a famous personality from amongst the family of the Prophet in order to use the people's love for them for their own purposes. The Imam ('a) knew that they did not believe in his imamate, or else it would have been meaningless for them to send three identical letters to three individuals from the family of the Prophet.

With the highest levels of awareness, the Imam ('a) knew that the original planners of the revolution were the 'Abbāsids, and that they only sought to gain power for their own ends. People such as Abū Mūslim and Abū Salmah' were only disposable tools in their hands. The Imam ('a) knew that the real leaders of the revolt would soon replace or kill anyone who was of no use to them or who stood in the way of their goals. This very thing ended up befalling Abū Mūslim, Abū Salmah', Sulaymān ibn Kathīr, and others like them.

The Imam ('a) knew that the likes of Abū Salmah' and Abū Mūslim had been tricked, and that they were not on the true path of Islam. Therefore, he was not ready, under any condition, to cooperate with them and to give legitimacy to their undertakings. He knew that the leaders of the revolt were not people of his school of thought. These people practiced excess in the ways of seeking power and taking revenge; they engaged in actions that no true Muslim could ever approve of.

Ibrāhīm Imām's Horrifying Command to Abū Mūslim

The books of history have recorded the commands of Ibrāhīm Imām, which were directed to Abū Mūslim Khurāsānī during the initial stages of the revolt. Abū Mūslim was a famous champion who had been named 'Commander of the family of Muḥammad' in the movement. During a trip to Mecca, he visited Ibrāhīm Imām for his orders. Ibrāhīm Imām gave him a black flag, which was to become one of the symbols

---

[237] Doctor Fārūq, 'Umar, Ṭabīat al-Da'wat al-'Abbāsīah, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Al-'Irshād, 1389 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 226.

of the revolt, along with a set of orders. Abu Mūslim was ordered to begin a general revolt in the Khurāsān region. In order to truly comprehend the reality of the likes of Ibrāhīm Imām, Abū Mūslim, and other 'Abbāsid leaders, let us examine the exact orders he was given, verbatim.

During the beginning of the order, Ibrāhīm Imām, in order to deceive Abū Mūslim (who was an inexperienced young man at the time), says: "You are a man from our 'Ahl al-Bayt', act upon my orders... in being loyal towards us, kill anyone whom you have a doubt or misgiving about. If you are able to not leave even one Arab speaking individual alive in Khurāsān, then do so. Wherever you see a child of five hand spans in height and you have misgivings about him, then kill him also."[238]

In this way, Ibrāhīm Imām explicitly commanded Abū Mūslim to engage in unrestrained murder and the spilling of blood. Maqrizī is quoted as saying: "If Ibrāhīm Imām wished to dispatch Abū Mūslim to the lands of the polytheists in order to invite them towards Islam, such an order would have been unacceptable even then. This is while he sent him to the Muslim territories and commanded him towards the killing of Muslims."[239]

The Crimes of Abū Mūslim

Unfortunately, Abū Mūslim followed this bloody order t the letter. Things soon reached the point where according to 'Yāfi'ī', he became the 'Ḥajjāj' of his time by killing countless numbers of people.[240] Historians have noted: "The number of people that Abū Mūslim killed during his period of rule is

---

[238] Ibn Khaldūn, Al-'Ibr, Translated by 'Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī, vol. 1, Tehran, The Institute for Cultural Research and Study, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 2, p. 167.

- Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 10, p. 28.

[239] Maqrizī, Al-Nizā' wa al-Takhāsum Fīmā Bayna Banī Ummayah wa Banī Hāshīm, Cairo, Maktabah Ahrām, p. 67.

[240] Mirāt al-Jinān, Second Edition, Beirut, Mu'assasat al-'Alamī, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 285.

numbered to be 600,000 individuals."[241]

Abū Mūslim himself acknowledged these crimes; when he became fearful of Manṣūr, he wrote him a letter saying: "Your brother (Saffāḥ) ordered me to draw out my sword, to arrest on the count of a single misgiving, to kill on the smallest implication, and to accept no excuses. In fulfilling his commands, I dishonored many sanctified trusts which God had made obligatory their honoring. I spilt much blood which God had made unlawful to spill, and I took the government from its owners and gave it over to others..."[242]

Later on, Manṣūr also acknowledged this matter when he was about to kill Abū Mūslim. When he was counting off his crimes, he said: "Why did you torture 600,000 individuals and kill them?" Abū Mūslim, without denying anything, replied: "These were all done in order to strengthen the foundations of your government."[243] On another occasion, Abū Mūslim calculated the number of people killed by him in non-war situations as being 100,000 in total.[244]

Abū Mūslim did not even leave his long time companions alone; he ended up killing Abū Salmah' Khallāl, his longtime friend and supporter, who had been named the 'Vizier of the family of Muḥammad'.[245] This was while Abū Salmah' played a significant role in the 'Abbāsid victory and was in reality the economic foundation of the revolution. Therefore, it isn't particularly surprising when we read in history that when Abū Mūslim was going to the Ḥajj pilgrimage, the Bedouins fled

---

[241] Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Second Edition, Beirut, Maktabah Ma'ārif, 1977 A.D., vol. 10, p. 72.
- Ibn Khallakān, Wafīāt al-'Ayān, researched by: Doctor Iḥsān 'Abbās, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 3, p. 148.

[242] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbi'ah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 533.
- Khaṭīb Baghdādī, The History of Baghdad, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, vol. 10, p. 208.

[243] Doctor Fārūq, 'Umar, Ṭabīat al-Da'wat al-'Abbāsīah, First Edition, Beirut, Dār Al-'Irshād, 1389 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 45.

[244] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, 1384 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3, p. 105.

[245] Ibn Khallakān, Wafīāt al-'Ayān, researched by: Doctor Iḥsān 'Abbās, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 2, p. 196.

from near the roads becaue of what they had heard about his bloodthirsty nature.[246]

Selection and Planning

When it comes to the leaders of the ʿAbbāsid movement and their rejection by Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa), it is clear that the Imam saw them as being incapable of being the head of such a movement. Naturally, if the movement had been a sincere one, and had its leaders been capable, then the Imam (ʿa) would have definitely taken up the cause of the revolution.

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) understood the practical conditions of the Muslims with great depth, and he was also aware of their political and social circumstances. The Imam (ʿa) did not consider war and a subsequent victory as being sufficient in bringing about a true Islamic government. In order to establish a true Islamic government, it was not enough to array military forces for an attack on the opposing side. It was necessary first and foremost to form an ideological army who fully believed in the Imam (ʿa) and who were fully dedicated towards th cause. These forces were essential in supporting the new formed government and watching over it. Without such foundation, it is clear that the government would quickl become deviated; in time, it would become the same or worse as that which it had replaced.

The words of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) to one of his companions brings this issue into even clearer focus. It is narrated from Sadīr Ṣayrafī that he said: "I went to visit the Imam (ʿa) and said: 'Why are you sitting?' He said: 'Oh Sadīr, what has happened?' I said: 'I am speaking of the abundance of your friends, followers, and companions.' He said: 'How many do you think they number?' I said: '100,000.' He said: '100,000?' I said: 'Yes, and perhaps 200,000.' He said: '200,000?' I said: 'Yes, and perhaps half of this world's population.'

After these words were spoken, Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) went to Yanbiʿ alongside with Sadīr. There, the Imam (ʿa) saw a flock

[246] Ibn Khallakān, Ibid, vol. 3, p. 148.

of young goats and said: 'Oh Sadīr, if the number of our companions and followers reached the number of these goats, we would never remain sitting.'"[247]

From this tradition, it can be concluded that the Imam ('a) correctly understood that it was not sufficient to simply take the reins of power. As long as the government and its initiatives were not supported by the masses, then the success of an Islamic reformation could never be assured. What was initially needed were forces who could understand the goals of the government, have faith in its views, and support its institutions. In addition, these forces were necessary in order to explain various government matters to the masses, and to stand steadfast and firm against the various trials and difficulties which would invariably come their way.

From the words of Imam Ṣādiq ('a), it is understood that if he could have had the support of certain people who could have given fulfilment to the aims and goals of Islam after the armed victory, then he was prepared to engage in such an uprising. Unfortunately, the situation and conditions of his time did not fulfil these necessary qualifications and permit such a movement. It was for this reason that the Imam ('a) continued with his mission of educating the people in the hopes that one day soon, they would finally be ready for just such a movement.

mam Ṣādiq in Opposition to the 'Abbāsids

As we have seen, the 'Abbāsids used slogans of supporting the family of the Prophet and the fulfilment of justice in the society from the very beginning of their struggle against the Umayyids. Throughout the rule of the Umayyids, the oppression against the family of the Prophet (ṣ) had wounded the hearts of the Muslims, and the Umayyids had not restrained themselves from any act of wholesale oppression and tyranny. The 'Abbāsids used this extreme hatred which the masses felt towards the Umayyids for their own political purposes. Under

[247] Kulaynī, al-Ūsūl Min al-Kāfī, Second Edition, Tehran, Maktabah Ṣadūq, 1381 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 2, p. 242.

the guise of supporting the family of the Prophet, they initially gathered the support of the people towards their cause.

In time, the ʿAbbāsids did not follow through on their pledge of removing the oppression which had been enacted against the family of the Prophet, nor did they work to establish justice in the society. In reality, it was not long before they renewed the anti-Islamic policies of the Umayyids, and in fact increased them in severity and scope. The severity of their policies and actions reached the point that the people began to wish for the return of the Umayyids!

When we look at the caliphate of Saffāḥ, the first ʿAbbāsid caliph, we find that the duration of his rule was short and the foundations of his government had not yet been fully established. For this reason, not much pressure was applied on the masses during his time and the family of the Prophet was not put under too many difficulties. Yet with the ascension of Manṣūr Dawānīqī as the caliph, the situation began to worsen, and the pressure on the society was increased dramatically. Manṣūr also ruled for a relatively long period of time (about 21 years) and his rule was contemporary with the life of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa). Seeing as this was the case, let us take a look at some instances from the rule of Manṣūr when he reached the caliphate:

The Politics of Economic Hardship

Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr, the second ʿAbbāsid caliph, was an individual known for his tyrannical and cold-hearted nature. He was known for his extreme suspicion towards everyone and his first impulse was to have people killed at the slightest hint of criticism. He transformed the state of the Muslims into one of difficulty and misery.

In addition to Manṣūr's tyranny and oppression, he was extremely materialistic and miserly. He is famous amongst the ʿAbbāsid caliphs for his level of stinginess and his worship of money. The books of history have narrated many stories of his excess in this regard. In spite of this, the financial pressures

which he enacted on the society and his extravagance cannot be explained as a simple side effect of his materialism.

During his rule, Manṣūr actually implemented a policy where he purposely crippled the economic situation of the Muslim society and deprived the people of everything which they possessed. He not only considered the public treasury as his own personal wealth, but he also took the personal property of the people for his own private use. He even abstained from acts of public development and construction. He did not leave wealth for anyone, and by doing so, he accumulated approximately 800 million Dirhams during the period of his rule.[248]

Historical documents indicate that this policy of Manṣūr was a cold and calculated strategy designed to cripple the economy and bring about certain results for Manṣūr's government. Manṣūr's goal in enacting this economic policy was to create a constant condition of neediness and hunger in the masses, forcing them to rely on him for all of their needs. As a result, the people would only think of meeting their basic needs and they would become incapable of thinking about the larger social issues that were at hand.

One day, in a gathering of his friends and court officials, Manṣūr sarcastically mentioned his reasons behind keeping the people hungry. He said: "The Bedouin Arabs have said it well when they say: 'Keep your dog hungry so that he will follow you in the hope of some bread.'" At this, one of the people present became upset at this demeaning remark and said: "I fear that another will show a piece of bread to this dog, and in order to get the bread, the dog will follow him and leave you."[249]

During the period of his caliphate, Manṣūr not only implemented this policy of economic deprivation and hunger, but he also taught this inhumane method to his son Mahdī as well. During the course of one of his testaments to his son, he

---

[248] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, vol. 3, p. 125.

[249] Sharīf al-Qarshī, Bāqir, Ḥayāt al-Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far (a), Second Edition, 1389 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 369.

said: "I have made the people obedient and submissive towards me by using various methods. Know that the people are of three groups. One group is the poverty stricken and helpless, who will stretch a hand of need towards you. Another group are the fugitives and they are always fearful for their lives. The third group passes its days in the corners of the prisons and sees their freedom only in your forgiveness and pardon. When you reach the caliphate, do not give the people any room to enjoy comfort and ease."[250]

These realities show that Manṣūr's economic policies were devised as a way of strengthening and further stabilizing the foundations of his government; he also wished to prevent any organized opposition from taking form amongst the people. For this reason, it is not correct to say that Manṣūr was just materialistic and loved wealth— his policies were coldly calculated and designed according to long term planning.

A Wave of Blood

Manṣūr's policies were not confined only to economic hardship, financial deprivation, and forced starvation. In addition to his economic policies, he also instilled fear in the people through the use of mass murder and torture. He ha professional executioners in his government and every sing day, a fresh group would fall victim to them.

One day, Manṣūr's uncle said the following words to him: "You have assailed the people with such ferocity and harshness that it is as if the word 'forgiveness' has never reached your ears." Manṣūr gave him the following reply: "The bones of the Marwanids are not yet rotten and the swords of the Hāshimīs have not yet been put back into their sheaths; we are passing our days amongst a people who just yesterday saw us as ordinary individuals and today see us as rulers. Therefore, we can only inspire awe and fear in their hearts by letting go of the

[250] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Ya'qūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, vol. 3, p. 133.

concept of forgiveness and exercising punishment on them."[251]

Manṣūr's oppressive policies existed in virtually every facet of his government and they extended to all the cities under his rule, but they were particularly severe in the city of Medina. The reason behind this severity was that the people of Medina had a close relationship with the teachings of Islam because of the central role they had played in the growth and defense of the new religion. Due to this background, they were not ready to live under a corrupt government and submit to the likes of Manṣūr. They did not accept every act of the government as being the final word in Islam. Moreover, after the Prophet (ṣ) passed away, the city of Medina was predominantly the center of the guidance and preaching of the Imams ('a). Until the time of the Eighth Imam ('a), the Imams ('a) resided in Medina and they were a continuous source for the rise of successive Islamic movements.

Medina under Economic Siege

After the revolt of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Ḥasan, famously known as 'Nafsu Zakīya', Manṣūr selected Rīyāḥ ibn 'Uthmān for the governorship of Medina. Rīyāḥ was an extremely cruel, cold-hearted, and merciless individual, and Manṣūr wished to recruit him to put an end to the revolt. Rīyāḥ entered the city of Medina and gathered the people in order to speak to them. He said: "Oh people of Medina, I am a viper and the son of a viper. I am the son of the uncle of Muslim ibn 'Uqbah,[252] who brought your city to destruction and killed your men. I swear by God that if you do not submit, I will crush your city in a way where no signs of life will remain."

When he reached this point in his speech, a group of the Muslims stood up and shouted in protest: "An individual such

---

[251] Ḥaydar, Asad, al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbi'ah, Second Edition, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1-2, p. 480.

- 'Abd al-Raḥmān Suyūṭī, The History of the Caliphs, Third Edition, Baghdad, Maktabah al-Muthannā, 1383 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 267.

[252] Mūslim ibn 'Uqbah was one of the commanders of Yazīd ibn Mū'âwīya who attacked the city of Medina under his orders, and engaged in three days of wholesale murder, rape, and plunder. As a result of his crimes, he became known as Mūsrif ibn 'Uqbah.

as yourself, who has such a disgraceful past in Islam, and whose father was twice lashed for his crimes, is unworthy to do such a thing. We will never allow you act in this manner with us."

Rīyāḥ reported back to Manṣūr that the people of Medina had revolted and were not obeying his commands. Manṣūr sent a harsh letter through Rīyāḥ to the people of Medina and threatened that if they continued to disobey, then he would shut down the routes of trade from both the sea and the land, leaving them to live under an economic siege. He also promised to send military forces to fight against them and crush their revolt.

Rīyāḥ called the people to gather at the mosque and when everyone was present, he went to the top of the pulpit and began to read the caliph's letter. He had not yet finished reading the letter when the people began to shout in protest from every corner of the mosque. The people's rage had been kindled and they began to throw stones at him while he was on the pulpit. Rīyāḥ fled from the gathering in order to save his life and he was forced to hide from the people...[253] When Manṣūr heard about this, he acted on his threat and closed off all routes c trade into the city. Medina was placed under siege, and th situation lasted until the caliphate of his son Mahdī ʿAbbāsī.[2

Imam Ṣādiq and Manṣūr

Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr was extremely worried about the political activities of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa). The love of the people towards the Imam (ʿa) and his intellectual greatness further added to these feelings. Due to these worries, from time to time, Manṣūr would summon Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) to Iraq and draw up plans to have him killed. Every single time, his plans were neutralized.[255]

Manṣūr was also very careful about the Shias of Medina and he did his utmost to watch them and keep them under control.

---

[253] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, vol. 3, p. 114-115.

[254] Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil Fī Tārīkh, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, vol. 5, p. 551.

[255] ʿAllāmah Majlisī has created an independent section for the meetings of Imam Ṣādiq (a) and Manṣūr in his Biḥār al-'Anwār. Refer to: vol. 47, p. 162-212.

He even had a group of spies in the city who were commissioned with seeking out and killing anyone who started to become close with the followers of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa).[256]

Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) was very careful to prevent his companions from becoming close and cooperating with the government of the Abbasids. One day, one of his companions asked him: "Some of the Shias are sometimes afflicted with difficulties in making a living and it is suggested to them that they build homes or dig canals for the ʿAbbāsids. What is your opinion on this matter?" The Imam (ʿa) replied: "I would not like to tie (even) a knot or to fasten the lid on a water skin for them, even if they were to give me a large sum of money for it. Verily the ones who help the oppressors will be encircled with fire until God judges over his servants."[257]

The Imam (ʿa) would also prohibit the Shias from referring any cases to the governmental courts, and he did not consider the rulings that were issued from these courts as being religiously obligatory to follow. The Imam (ʿa) would also warn the jurisprudents and narrators of tradition to not affiliate themselves with the government in any shape or form. He would say: "The jurisprudents are the trustees of the Prophets (ʿa); if you see them turn towards the kings (and become close to them and cooperate with them), then become suspicious of them and do not rely upon them."[258]

One day, Abū Jaʿfar Manṣūr wrote the following to Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa): "Why do you not visit us like everyone else?" The Imam (ʿa) wrote back: "We do not possess anything (in terms of worldly wealth and possessions) to be fearful on its behalf from you, and you, in terms of the next world, do not have anything upon which we can be hopeful for. You are neither the possessor of any blessings that we should congratulate you

---

[256] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Marifat al-Rijāl (Famously known as Rijāl Kashshī), researched and edited by Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, p. 282.

[257] Shaykh Hurr ʿĀmūlī, Wasā'il al-Shīʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, vol. 12, p. 129.

[258] Ḥaydar, Asad, Al-Imām Ṣādiq wa al-Madhāhib al-Arbiʿah, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabīya, 1390 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 3-4, p. 21 (narrated from Ḥilyat al-Aw'līyā).

on its behalf, and neither do you see yourself under any calamity or affliction so that we can console you; therefore why should we come to you?"

Manṣūr wrote back in response: "Come and advise us." Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) replied: "If someone is from the people of this world (those who are worldly and materialistic), they will not admonish you, and if they are from the people of the hereafter (the religious), then they will also not come to you."[259]

The Creation of Religious Scholars

The Umayyid rulers worked hard through various means and methods to create a distance between the people and the Imam's school of thought. They would encourage people to refer to their own government sponsored jurisprudents, and if they were not willing to do that, they would at least encourage them to refer to the non-government jurisprudents who were not a threat to their rule. Although the ʿAbbāsids began their movement with slogans in solidarity and in support of the Hāshimīs, they ended up pursuing the very same policies of the Umayyids once they had strengthened and solidified th foundations of their power.

The ʿAbbāsid caliphs, much like their Umayyid counterparts, considered the Imams as threats to their power and rule. They realized that the people were attracted to their spiritual presence and drawn to their coherent religious and theological philosophy. For this reason, they would do their best to isolate them through whichever means they could think of. This issue was most apparent during the time of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa). The ʿAbbāsids worked to introduce certain individuals, some of whom had been the students of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa), as comprehensive scholars whom the people could refer to in matters of religion. Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik ibn Anas are two examples of these efforts.

---

[259] Majlisī, Biḥār al-'Anwār, Tehran, al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1395 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 47, p. 184.

A Compulsory Compilation

To these ends, Manṣūr Dawānīqī would honor and respect Mālik ibn Anas to an extraordinary degree, and he introduced him as the official religious jurisprudent which the people could refer to in matters of religion. In the city of Medina, an 'Abbāsid spokesman declared that: "Besides Mālik ibn Anas and Ibn Abī Dhi'b no one has the right to issue religious rulings."[260]

Manṣūr also ordered Mālik to compile a book of religious traditions and put it at the disposal of the scholars in the field of traditions. Mālik tried to refrain from this action, but Manṣūr insisted. One day, Manṣūr said to Mālik: "You must write this book, for today no one exists that is more knowledgeable than you."

In response to his insistence, Mālik ending up compiling the book Muwaṭa.[261] Following this, the government put all of its weight behind supporting and propagating Malik's school of thought. Through propagating Mālik's school of thought, they wanted to pull the people away from Imam Ṣādiq ('a) and his revolutionary school of thought. Manṣūr said to Mālik: "If I live long enough, I will send your religious rulings to all of the cities just like the Quran, and I will oblige the people to act upon them."[262]

Naturally, these scholars were the witting or unwitting supporters of the interests of the governments of their time. If this were not the case, the caliphs wouldn't have put so much money and effort into supporting them. If the caliph had even suspected that a scholar had taken a step against their interests,

---

[260] Ibn Khallakān, Wafīāt al-'Ayān, researched by: Doctor Iḥsān 'Abbās, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 4, p. 135.
- Suyūṭī, Tanwīr al-Ḥawālik 'Alā Muwaṭa' Mālik, Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, Muqadamah.

[261] Sharīf al-Qarshī, Bāqir, Ḥayāt al-Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far (a), Second Edition, 1389 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 91 (narrated from Sharḥ Zarqānī on Malik's Muwaṭa'). The book Muwaṭa' is one of the famous books of the Ahl al-Sunnah today and its compiler is Mālik ibn Anas, the head of the Mālikī school which is one of the four main Sunni schools of thought.

[262] Dhahabī, Shamsh al-Dīn Muḥammad, Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, Beirut, Dār Aḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, vol. 1, p. 212.

or that they were secretly in disagreement with them, they would be punished severely. This is precisely what ended up happening to Mālik ibn Anas, in spite of initially being so honored by Manṣūr. When Mālik began to criticize Manṣūr in front of the son of Manṣūr's uncle, Malik was lashed seventy times on the caliph's orders. This criticism was in relation to an edict which Mālik had issued against the wishes of the caliph.[263]

The Revolt of Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn

Zayd ibn ʿAlī was the brother of Imam Bāqir (ʿa), and he was known as a virtuous individual from the family of the Prophet (ṣ). He was a learned man who was an ascetic, pious, courageous, and intrepid.[264] He also lived during the rule of the Umayyids. Throughout his life, Zayd had seen a great deal of oppression and tyranny from the rulers of his time. He believed that the only option to stop the Umayyid government was to fight against them in an armed revolt and so he decided to prepare the grounds for just such a movement.

The Summoning of Zayd to Damascus

Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik was aware of the revolutionary spirit of Zayd, and he had decided to have him killed in order to save himself from any danger which he posed. Hishām drew up certain plans aimed toward these ends. He then had Zayd, who was in Medina at that time, summoned to Damascus. When Zayd entered Damascus and went to the government palace to meet with Hishām, Hishām initially greeted him very coldly. He began to ridicule him and he did not allow him to be seated.

Hishām then said to him: "Yūsuf ibn ʿAmr Thaqafī (the governor of Iraq) has reported to me that Khālid ibn ʿAbdullah Qasrī has given you 600,000 dirhams, and you must return this

---

[263] Ibn Khallakān, Wafīāt al-ʿAyān, researched by Doctor Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Second Edition, Qum, Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, 1364 Hijrī Shamshi, vol. 4, p. 137.

[264] Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, al-Fakhrī, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1386 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 132.

money." Zayd replied: "Khālid has not given anything to me." Hishām said: "Then you must go to Yūsuf ibn ʿAmr in Iraq until he settles things between you and Khālid." Zayd said: "Do not send me to an ignoble individual from the tribe of Thaqīf so that he can disrespect me." Hishām replied: "You have no choice, you must go!" Then he added: "I have heard that you consider yourself suitable for the caliphate and entertain thoughts about it. This is while you are nothing more than the son of a slave, and it does not befit the son of a slave to sit on the seat of the caliphate."

When Zayd heard this, he replied: "Do you think that the circumstances of my mother takes away from my worth? Have you forgotten that Isḥāq was born from a free woman, while the mother of Ismāʿīl was a slave? Yet God selected the line of the prophets from Ismāʿīl's lineage and the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) is from his lineage." Then Zayd admonished Hishām and invited him towards piety and virtue. Hishām said: "Is it that an individual such as yourself is inviting me towards piety and virtue?" Zayd replied: "Yes, for enjoining the good and forbidding the evil are two of the important commandments of Islam and their application is obligatory upon everyone. No one should refrain from this duty due to the humbleness of their position and rank, and no one has the right to refuse to listen to it based on the pretext of their high rank."

A Compulsory Journey

After Hishām had finished speaking with Zayd, he sent him to Iraq and he wrote a letter to Yūsuf ibn ʿAmr, saying: "When Zayd arrives, confront him with Khālid and do not give him permission to stay in Kūfah for even one hour, for he is a man of eloquence, an orator, and of charismatic presence. If he remains there in Kūfah, the people will begin to follow him." As soon as Zayd entered the city of Kūfah, he went to see Yūsuf and said: "Why have you dragged me all the way here?" Yūsuf replied: "Khālid claims that he has given you 600,000 dirhams." Zayd said: "Bring Khālid, so that if he has a claim,

he can make it personally." Yūsuf ordered that Khālid be brought from prison. Yūsuf turned to him and said: "This is Zayd ibn ʿAlī, therefore declare anything that you have given to him." Khālid replied: "I swear by God that I have not given anything to him and your purpose in bringing him here is only to harass him."

Upon hearing this, Yūsuf faced Zayd and said: "The Commander of the Faithful Hishām has ordered that I am to expel you from Kūfah this very day." Zayd said: "Give me three days reprieve so that I may rest and then leave Kūfah." Yūsuf said: "It is not possible and you must leave this very day." Zayd said: "Then give me reprieve so that I may remain today." Yūsuf replied: "Even one hour's reprieve is not possible."[265] Following this event, Zayd left Kūfah accompanied with some of Yūsuf's government officials, and began traveling towards Medina. After some distance from Kūfah, the officials returned and left Zayd to travel alone...

In Kūfah

Zayd's entrance into Iraq caused excitement and turmoil amongst the people, and news of what had taken place between him and Hishām spread everywhere. The people of Kūfah, who were witness to these events from up close, quickly went to meet Zayd when news reached them that he had left for Medina. When they reached him, they expressed their support and said: "Come and live in Kūfah, and take the people's oath of allegiance. You should be certain that 100,000 individuals will give their oath to you and are prepared to fight under your command. This is while the Umayyids are only few in number; in the very first attack, they will be put to flight."

Zayd knew the history of the Kufans in regard to their disloyalty and how quickly they would break their oaths and pledges. He had not forgotten what had taken place during the time of Imam ʿAlī (ʿa), Imam Ḥasan (ʿa), and Imam Ḥusayn

---

[265] Ibn Wāḍih, The History of Yaʿqūbī, Najaf, Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Ḥaydarīa, vol. 3, p. 67-68.

('a). As a result, he didn't put much weight on their promises and oaths. In spite of his misgivings, the Kufans continued to insist and so he changed his mind in regards to Medina and returned back to Kūfah. The people began to come to him in groups and gave him their oath of allegiance. This reached the point where there were 25,000 individuals prepared for war from Kufah alone.

The Great Battle

At the same time, the authorities were keeping careful watch over the situation. Yūsuf ibn 'Amr was constantly reporting back to Hishām on the anti Umayyid forces which were gathering around Zayd. Hishām became extremely frightened about the rebellion gaining momentum and so he ordered Yūsuf to attack Zayd's forces without delay and crush the revolt before it could gather steam.

Both sides gathered their forces and a hard battle ensued. Zayd fought with great bravery and courage, and he was constantly encouraging his troops to fight with everything that they had. The battle went on until nightfall. As the battle continued to rage, an arrow flew out and struck Zayd's forehead, penetrating it. Zayd was unable to continue leading the battle, and this was while a number of his companions had also been killed. Another group soon became scattered and Zayd realized that it was not possible to continue the fight. Without having any other option, he ordered his forces to retreat.

The Martyrdom of Zayd

During that night, a doctor who specialized in surgery was called in to remove the arrowhead from Zayd's forehead. Unfortunately, the arrowhead had penetrated so deeply that its removal was a very difficult process. After much effort, the surgeon was finally able to bring out the arrowhead. However, due to severity of the wound, Zayd ended up passing away.

The companions of Zayd deliberated for a period of time

and they decided to bury Zayd's body under a river which was flowing through that area. This was to prevent the enemy from taking the body and desecrating it as was their custom in such situations. These companions decided to divert the water from its original course, bury the body, and then allow the water to flow back where it had once been. In this way, they would conceal the body from Hishām's government agents.

Unfortunately, one of Hishām's agents was watching the burial and he reported the incident to Yūsuf ibn ʿAmr. Under the order of Yūsuf, the body of Zayd was disinterred and his head was cut off from his body. His body was then hung in the garbage pit of Kūfah, and it remained there for a period of four years. The body was then brought down, burned, and the ashes thrown to the wind!

Did Imam Ṣādiq Agree with the Revolt of Zayd?

In regards to Zayd, there are many contradicting traditions which have been reportedly narrated from the Imams (ʿa) in regards to whether he was a Shia, as well as whether he himself claimed to be an imam. In some of these traditions, he i rebuked, while in others he is praised.

The majority of our scholars and researchers, from both pas times, as well as modern times, have rejected the traditions which criticize Zayd on the basis of their chains of narration, and they have considered them to be inauthentic. As an example, the late Ayatollah Khū'ī spent some time researching these traditions and he ruled them to be weak in terms of their chain of narration and thus unreliable. He said: "As a result of what we found, we have concluded that Zayd was a great individual and worthy of praise. No (authentic) document exists which shows him to be deviated in regards to his beliefs or which criticize him."[266]

The late ʿAllāmah Majlisī has also mentioned these traditions concerning Zayd and has written: "Know that the traditions concerning Zayd are varying and contradictory. The

[266] Muʿajam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth, Qum, Madinat al-ʿIlm, vol. 7, p. 345-356.

news which praises and honors him, and mentions that he did not have any illegitimate claims are greater in number. As a result, the majority of the Shia scholars have attested to his high rank and status. Therefore, it is appropriate to assume the best about him and refrain from criticizing him..."[267]

In regard to Zayd's revolt, there is testimony and evidence that it was started with the permission and consent of Imam Ṣādiq ('a). Amongst this evidence is the answer of Imam Riḍā ('a) to a question which Ma'mūn asked. Imam Riḍā ('a) said: "My father, Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('a), narrated that he heard from his father Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ('a) that: '...Zayd consulted with me in regards to his revolt and I said to him: Dear uncle, if you like to be that same individual who will be hung in the garbage pit (of Kūfah), then this is the path.' And when Zayd left the presence of Imam Ṣādiq ('a), the Imam ('a) said: 'Woe upon the person who hears his call and does not hasten to his assistance.'"[268]

This tradition is potent evidence that Zayd's revolt was initiated with the permission of the Imam ('a). Due to the dangers of the time, it was necessary that this consent was hidden and not allowed to reach the ears of the enemy. For this reason, neither the Imam ('a), nor Zayd, nor any of the close companions were interested in disclosing this information to the general public.

When Imam Ṣādiq ('a) was speaking with one of the companions of Zayd who had killed six individuals from the Umayyid Army during the battle, he said: "May God make me a partner in this blood (referring to the Umayyids who he killed). I swear by God that my uncle Zayd took up the method of 'Alī ('a) and his companions."[269] Zayd was also a believer in

---

[267] Biḥār al-'Anwār, vol. 46, p. 205. Also refer to: The Personality and Revolt of Zayd ibn 'Alī, p. 514-527.

- It should be noted that the praise of Zayd from the Shia scholars should not be construed as support of the sect which has taken on his name.

[268] Ṣadūq, 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (a), First Edition, Beirut, Mu'assasah' al-'Alamī Lil Maṭbū'āt, 1404 Hijrī Qamarī, vol. 1, p. 225, Section 25, Ḥadīth 1.

[269] Tastarī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī, Qāmūs al-Rijāl, Second Edition, Mu'assasah' al-Nashr al-Islāmī, vol. 4, p. 570.

the imamate of Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa). It has been narrated from him that he said: "Jaʿfar is our Imam in the Ḥalāl (lawful) and the Ḥarām (unlawful)."[270]

Zayd would also say: "During every era, one individual from us, the family of the Prophet, is the proof of God. The proof of our time is my nephew Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad (ʿa). Whoever follows him will not be misguided, and whoever opposes him, will not gain salvation."[271] Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) is also narrated to have said: "May God bless my uncle Zayd; whenever he was victorious, he would be faithful (to his words). My uncle Zayd would invite the people towards the leadership of the chosen one from the family of Muḥammad (ṣ) and that individual was none other than myself."[272]

In another tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa), it is narrated that he said about Zayd: "May God bless him; he was a pious man... learned and truthful. If he was victorious, he would be faithful to his pledge, and if he had gained power, he knew who to entrust it to."[273] The news of the martyrdom of Zayd and his companions ended up having a deep effect in Medina. More than anyone else, Imam Ṣādiq (ʿa) was the most deeply affected. After Zayd's martyrdom, such a deep sorrow and grief tool over the Imam (ʿa) that whenever the word Kūfah and Zayc were mentioned, tears would come out of his eyes and he would speak in praise of his martyred uncle and his companions.

---

[270] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Marifat al-Rijāl (Famously known as Rijāl Kashshī), researched and edited by: Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, 1348 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 361.

[271] Ṣadūq, Al-Amālī, Qum, al-Maṭba'at Hikmah, 1373 Hijrī Qamarī, p. 325, Majlis 81, Ḥadīth 6.

[272] Tastarī, Ibid, p. 566.

[273] Shaykh Ṭūsī, Ikhtīyār Marifat al-Rijāl (Famously known as Rijāl Kashshī), researched and edited by: Ḥasan Muṣṭafāwi, Mashhad, University of Mashhad, 1348 Hijrī Shamshi, p. 285.